

THE WORLD'S FINEST GAMING PC's

AVAILABLE WITH **NEXT DAY DELIVERY**



CHILLBLAST FUSION
RYZEN 5
GTX 1660 GAMING PC

- AMD Ryzen 5 2400G Processor
- 8GB DDR4 2666MHz RAM
- NVIDIA GTX 1660 6GB GPU
- 250GB M.2 Solid State Drive
- 1TB Hard Disk Drive
- 802.11n WiFi
- Windows 10 Home

Price: £1129.99



CHILLBLAST FUSION
RTX 2080
CUSTOM GAMING PC

- Intel Core i7-9700K Processor
- 16GB DDR4 2666MHz RAM
- NVIDIA RTX 2080 8GB GPU
- 250GB M.2 Solid State Drive
- 2TB Hard Disk Drive
- 802.11n WiFi
- Windows 10 Home

Price: £1949.99

SAVE £30 on any NEXT DAY PC with code CA2703

Buy from www.chillblast.com with **FREE NEXT DAY DELIVERY** to UK mainland addresses

Call our sales team on: **01202 068 333**



The UK's Most Awarded PC Manufacturer
Winner of twenty four "best PC brand" awards!
Rated 'Excellent' on TrustPilot

Pictures are for illustration only. The promotional code is valid until 01-06-19.
Terms and conditions are on the website. All trademarks are acknowledged.
Prices are correct at time of going to press (13-03-19) E&OE.



**STREAM RADIO THROUGHOUT
YOUR HOME** (It's easier than ever!) p35

Listen to ALL your favourite stations

Computer **active**

ISSUE 550 | 27 MAR – 9 APR 2019

Bluetoothbrush, anyone? p26

Learn something new in every issue

Stop the new
**WINDOWS
UPDATE**
**BREAKING
YOUR PC**

You're just 7 steps
away from averting
disaster **p38**

Don't Bin Your Old **USB STICKS**

The **20 BEST** things you didn't know these
brilliant little devices could do **p50**

- ✓ Run Windows 10 on *any* PC
- ✓ Use your own software anywhere
- ✓ Access files via your Wi-Fi router
- ✓ Expand your phone's storage
- ✓ Rescue your PC when hacked

+ Many more inside **p50**



**HAS YOUR OLD SOFTWARE
BECOME UNSAFE?** Check now **p60**

**DON'T PAY FOR
EXPENSIVE MESH WI-FI**

Why **powerlines & repeaters** are better for
hard-to-reach areas – **six tested** **p24**





PC Specialist recommends Windows  Windows 10



CUSTOM GAMING DESKTOPS & LAPTOPS

ORDER ONLINE NOW AT

WWW.PCSPECIALIST.CO.UK

GET A FURTHER £15 OFF WITH
THIS EXCLUSIVE VOUCHER CODE:

CA298

0333 011 7000

Some features require Windows 10. Update available through Windows Store. Internet access required; fees may apply.
Microsoft, and Windows are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

/PCSPECIALIST



@PCSPECIALIST





From the Editor

EDITORIAL

Group Editor Daniel Booth
Deputy Editor Will Stapley
Production Editor Graham Brown
Art Editor Katie Peat
Contributors Adam Banks, Dinah Greek, Jane Hoskyn, Jonathan Parkyn, Nick Peers, Nik Rawlinson, Wayne Williams

ADVERTISING

Advertising Director Charlotte Milligan
Advertising Manager Alexa Dracos

MARKETING AND CIRCULATION

Subscriptions Rachel Hare
Marketing Production Manager Gemma Hills
For subscription enquiries ring 0330 333 9493

PRODUCTION

Group Production Manager
Stephen Catherall
Production Controller
Sophie Griffin

MANAGEMENT

Managing Director John Garewal
MD of Advertising Julian Lloyd-Evans
Commercial and Retail Director David Barker
CFO/COO Brett Reynolds
Chief Executive James Tye
Company Founder Felix Dennis

BRAND USAGE AND REPRINTS

Companies can obtain a licence to use approved quotations from articles, the Computeractive logo and Buy It! logo. Reprints of articles are also available.

Please contact Ryan Chambers for more information and rates: 0203 890 4027
Email: ryan_chambers@dennis.co.uk
Requests to use quotations from articles will need to be approved by the editor. Please send requests to: editor@computeractive.co.uk

OVERSEAS LICENSING

Computeractive is available for international licensing. Contact Nicole Adams at nicole_adams@dennis.co.uk or +44 0203 890 3998

ONWARD RESALE

This publication may not be resold or otherwise distributed, whether at, below or above face value. Nor can this publication be advertised for sale, transfer or distribution.

PERMISSIONS

Material may not be reproduced in any form without the written consent of the publisher. Please address such requests to John Garewal, Dennis Publishing, 31-32 Alfred Place, London, WC1E 7DP

LIABILITY

While every care was taken preparing this magazine, the publishers cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of the information or any consequence arising from it. All judgments are based on equipment available to Computeractive at the time of review. Computeractive takes no responsibility for the content of external websites whose addresses are published in the magazine.

A DENNIS PUBLICATION
Computeractive is published fortnightly by Dennis Publishing, 31-32 Alfred Place, London, WC1E 7DP.
Company registered in England. Material may not be reproduced in whole or part without the consent of the publishers. ISSN 1461-6211

abc Average sales, Jan-Dec 2018, 73,513 copies per issue.

© Copyright Dennis Publishing Limited

Computeractive
Printed in the UK

USB sticks are recent additions to that mysterious group of miscellaneous items that clutter up kitchen drawers (scientifically known as bits and bobs). They've joined paperclips, string, staples, bottle tops and keys for long-lost padlocks as things you can't bear to throw away just in case they prove useful one day.

In the case of USB sticks, that day is today. I've not rummaged through Jonathan Parkyn's drawers, but I imagine they're home to significantly fewer USBs than a month ago. In our Cover Feature, he explains 20 ingenious

ways to use these sticks (or keys, flash drives, thumb drives, etc). Have a read, and you'll be glad you never got round to binning them.

Next issue: 1,000 amazing things to do with a paperclip. Number one: clip paper. Number two: erm... any ideas?

Daniel Booth
editor@computeractive.co.uk

PS: I'll send a *Computeractive* mug to the first reader to tell me which mathematical sequence is in Windows Calculator on page 49.



THIS ISSUE IN NUMBERS

5.3m

Number of UK adults who have never been online - **p8**

50 billion

How many Android apps Google scanned for malware every day in 2018 - **p11**

£3

Price of cables to connect routers to BT phone sockets - **p68**



HOW TO USE SNIPCA URLS

We use snipcas to turn long URLs that are hard to type into ones that are short and simple. They aren't websites themselves, which means they won't be recognised if you type them into Google. Instead, you need to type them into your browser address bar, then press Enter. Doing this will take you to the correct website.

Contents

27 March – 9 April 2019 • Issue 550

6 News

Microsoft to automatically remove broken Windows updates

10 **Question of the Fortnight** Why did it take so long to remove NZ massacre video?

11 Protect Your Tech

Live chat in fake Office 365 site

12 Letters

Banking 'bombshell' means I won't be able to shop online

14 Consumeractive

Can I sue Amazon for illegally signing me up to Prime?

16 Grow Your Family Tree

Automatically identify faces in photos

18 Best Free Software

Winaero Tweaker

21 Named & Shamed

Junk Offender: FileZilla

Reviews

22 PC Specialist Apollo S2

Cost-effective PC that's fast and flexible

23 Scan 3XS LG15 Vengeance

Laptop with desktop PC performance

24 Extend your Wi-Fi

Repeaters or powerline adapters? We round up the latest models

26 Motorola Moto G7

Budget phone in all its varieties

28 Ultimate Ears Boom 3

Portable speaker carries it off

Canon Pixma TS8250

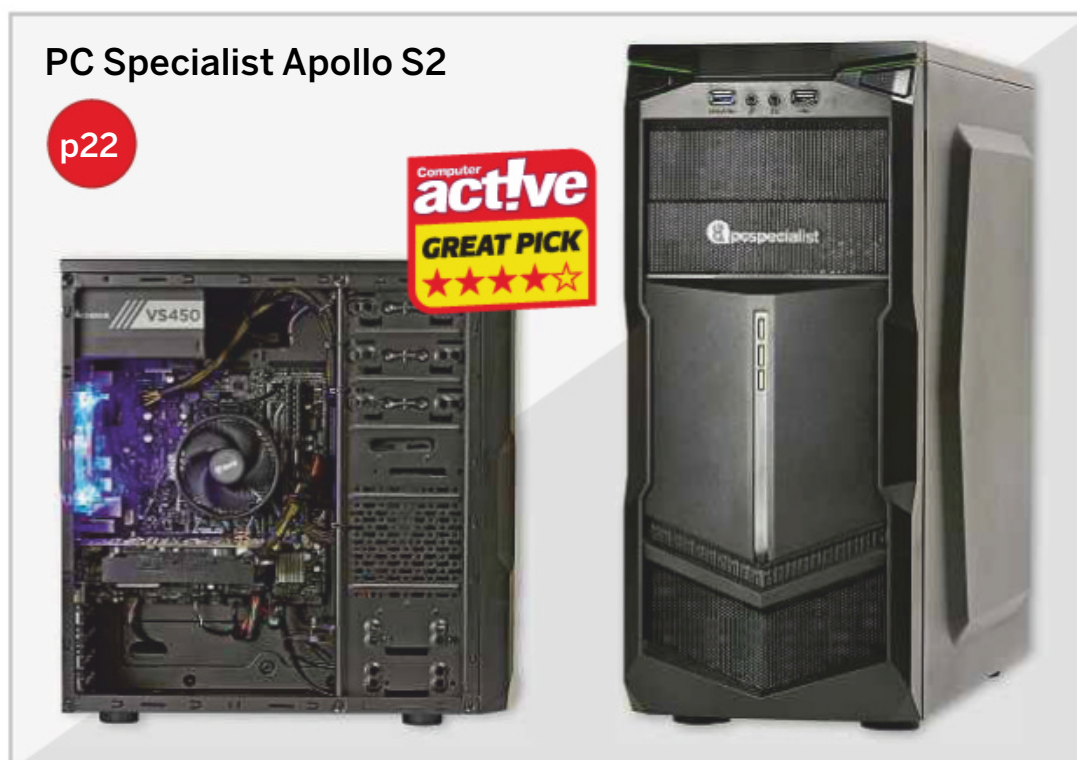
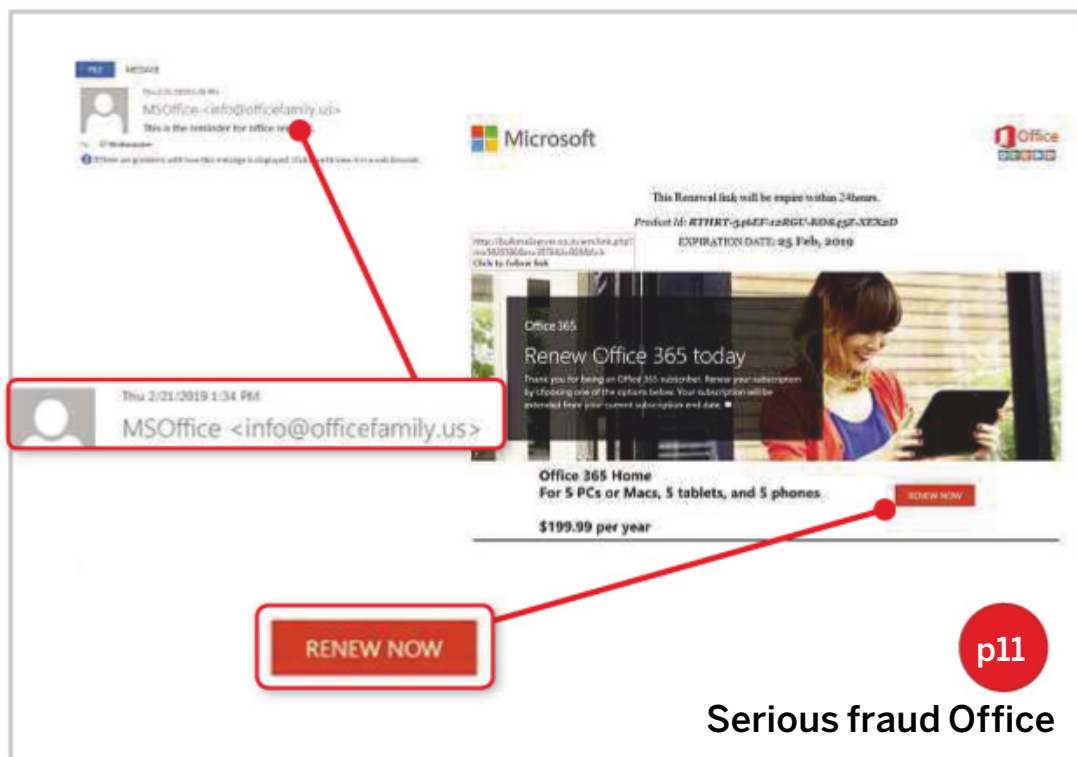
Upgraded printer – but at a price

29 Kobo Forma

E-reader takes a leaf out of Amazon's book

30 Buy It/ Competition

Win a Lioncast LX60 headset



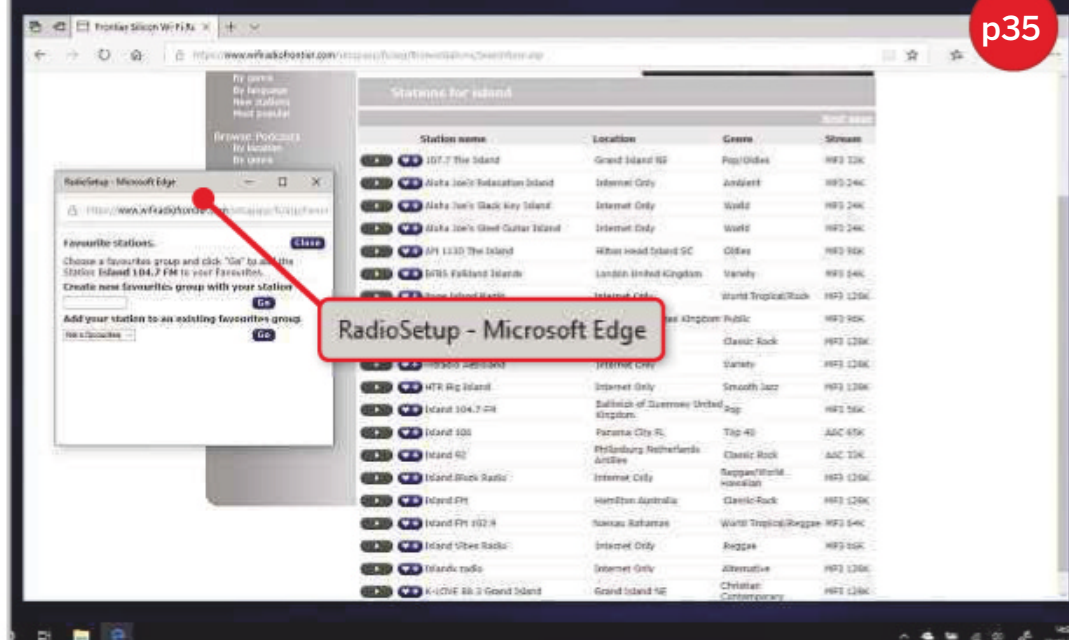
Subscribe now!
See page 58 for our special subs offer



Workshops & Tips

- 35 How to... Stream web radio throughout your home**
- 38 Update PC drivers so they work with the new version of W10**
- 40 Synchronise bookmarks across Chrome, Firefox and Edge**
- 42 Readers' Tips**
Change BT router to connect to 5GHz
- 44 Phone and Tablet Tips** Write emails faster with Gmail's new tool
- 46 Make Windows Better**
Create shortcuts for text you copy often
- 47 Make Office Better**
Calculate percentages between cells
- 48 In the Club**
Collect payments through PayPal
- 49 What's All the Fuss About?**
Windows Calculator
- 50 COVER FEATURE**
Don't bin your old USB sticks
We outline 20 ways you can put those trusty little storage drives to good use
- 60 How safe is your old software?**
We run the safety rule over programs that no longer receive security updates
- 62 Stop paying twice for the same service**
The hidden extras offered by ISPs and mobile-phone companies that could save you cash
- 64 Problems Solved**
Will my PC run a faster graphics card?
- 71 Reader Support**
How do I run the Alfred app?
- 73 Jargon Buster**
- 74 Easy When You Know How**
Create a paper-digitising workflow

Stay tuned in all around your home



Don't Bin Your Old USB STICKS

The **20 BEST** things you didn't know these brilliant little devices could do **p50**



Are your old programs a risk to your PC?



Microsoft to auto-remove broken Windows updates

Microsoft will soon start to automatically remove updates that cause problems on your PC,

and not attempt to reinstall them for 30 days.

It said this will give its developers enough time to investigate the problem and release a fix.

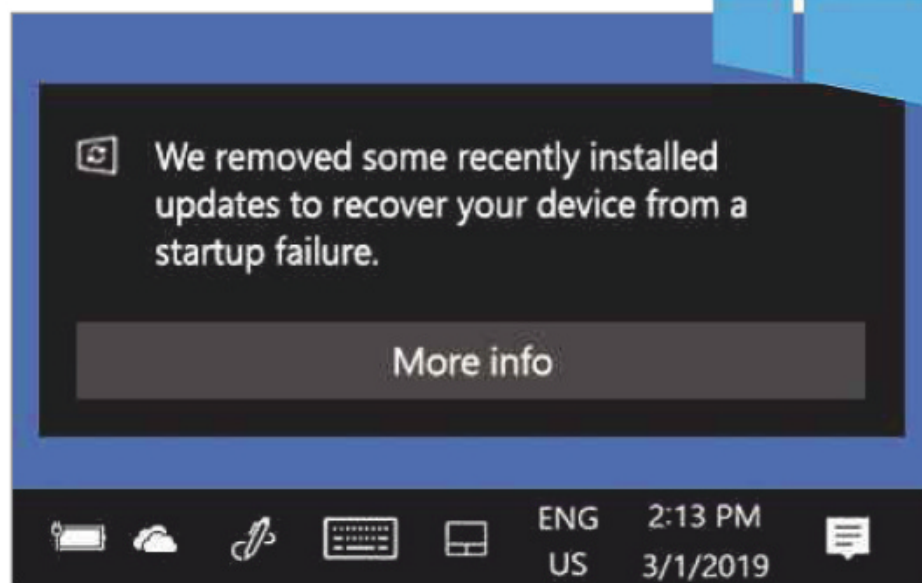
If Microsoft removes an update, you'll see the message "We removed some recently installed updates to recover your device from a startup failure" (see screenshot).

It added that it will only do this when your computer has failed to restart and "all other automatic recovery attempts have been unsuccessful".

Users who still want to install an update because they believe it didn't cause the problem can do so by downloading it from the Windows Update Catalog, as Microsoft explains at www.snipca.com/31009 (you can also use the Catalog to update **drivers** – see page 38).

WHAT WE THINK

If it feels unnerving that Microsoft can yank an update without asking your permission, it's better than suffering endless restarts as your PC struggles to swallow something it can't stomach. In the past, Microsoft used to explain these messages *after* they started appearing, so we're pleased it's giving users plenty of warning. As for the Windows 7 warnings, we're sceptical that saying you don't want to be notified again will mean nine months of silence. Given Microsoft's past form, we think it'll find another way to pester you.



However, Microsoft said it will uninstall these again if the computer fails to start properly.

Windows 7 users told to upgrade

As Microsoft prepares for another Windows 10 update in April, praying it will cause fewer problems than the October release, it will also start warning Windows 7 users that the operating system has only nine months of security support left.

Writing online (www.snipca.com/30999), Matt Barlow, Corporate Vice President for Windows, said Microsoft will show a message on screens as a "courtesy reminder that you can expect to see a handful of times in 2019".

He added: "By starting the reminders now, our hope is that you have time to plan and prepare for this transition".

The messages will

remind many users of Microsoft's persistent alerts encouraging them to upgrade to Windows 10.

These messages appeared for over 12 months after Windows 10 launched in July 2015. Mr Barlow promised it would be easy to stop the new messages appearing by clicking 'Do not notify me again'.

He urged Windows 7 users to visit www.microsoft.com/windows7 for advice on backing up their files and upgrading to Windows 10.

Mr Barlow also reminded users that support for Office 2010 ends on 13 October 2020 (for more details visit www.snipca.com/31006).

He signed off by saying: "Thank you to all of you who have loved Windows 7 and Office 2010 and for letting us serve you and be part of your lives. We're grateful for your loyalty and we're here to help you through this transition."

GOOGLE: UPGRADE TO WINDOWS 10

Google is doing Microsoft's work for it by urging Windows 7 users to upgrade to Windows 10, after discovering a security flaw in the 10-year-old operating system.

The company said it told Microsoft about the flaw on 27 February, before going public on 7 March (www.snipca.com/31010). It added that hackers could exploit the flaw, together with a separate



bug found in Chrome, to remotely access computers.

It released an update on 1 March to fix the Chrome flaw. Chrome updates are applied automatically, so check your version is 72.0.3626.121 or later – click the top-right menu button (three vertical dots), then About Google Chrome.

Microsoft said it will release a Windows 7 fix "as soon as possible".



You'll like this...

Two firms suspected of making nuisance calls have been raided (www.snipca.com/30997)



but not this...

CCleaner has a new software updater – in the paid-for version only (www.snipca.com/31013)

1,000 GP surgeries now using new NHS app for patients

Patients at 1,000 GP practices across England can now use the new NHS app to book appointments, view their records and order repeat prescriptions, NHS England has claimed.

It announced the milestone in early March, adding that it means 15 per cent of people in England can now access their GP's services digitally.

The app is on track to be "fully functional" in all practices by July, NHS England said, but some digital services are struggling to work with the app.

This includes Babylon Health, whose 'GP at hand' app (www.gpathand.nhs.uk) is used by 40,000 patients.

Dr Farah Jameel, head of IT at the General Practitioners Committee, said that because third-party apps like 'GP at hand' use different software to the NHS app, it wasn't surprising they've

had difficulties.

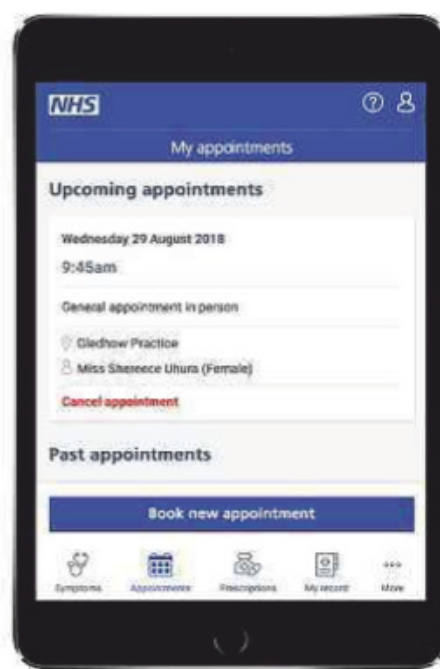
However, he said he was "pleased with the progress made so far on the NHS app – it has been carefully tested and responsibly deployed".

The app is part of the NHS's aim to make its services more available digitally to the public.

When it launched in January, NHS England deputy chief executive Matthew Swindells said the app was "the digital front door into the NHS, for those who want to use it".

Former Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt claimed last year that being able to book an appointment through the app would end the "8am scramble" to see a GP.

To install the app, visit www.snipca.com/31020, then scroll down and click either the Google Play (Android) or Apple App Store



(iPhone or iPad) link.

You can check whether your surgery is using the app when you first open it.

If it isn't, register with your email address and you'll be notified when it's ready.

To see which surgeries are already using the app, scroll down to the 'Connected GP surgeries' heading and click a region.

IN BRIEF

AMAZON ECHO ADDED TO INFLATION LIST

Smart speakers such as the Amazon Echo (Alexa) and Google Home are so popular they've been added to the list of 700 products used to calculate inflation. The Office of National Statistics said the decision reflects "modern spending habits". It has also added portable speakers, but removed Hi-fi systems. Envelopes are out too, as email and texting grows more popular.

VIRGIN ROUTER UPDATES 'BOOSTS SPEED'

Virgin Media has released **firmware** updates for its Hub 3.0 Wi-Fi routers (pictured) that it claims will boost your service. New features include band steering, which switches devices between 2.4GHz and 5.0GHz to maintain a strong signal. There's a new app called Connect that lets you test your signal strength, while Virgin is also offering a Wi-Fi extender for an extra £3 to your monthly broadband bill. Visit Virgin's site for details: www.snipca.com/30994.



Ofcom investigates BBC's news website

Telecoms watchdog Ofcom will examine whether the BBC runs too many irrelevant news stories on its website, after newspaper bosses criticised it for "chasing online traffic".

A study of what the BBC covers online was proposed by the Cairncross Review, published in February, which looked into how newspaper journalism could survive in the face of intense online competition (see 'Question of the Fortnight', Issue 548).

It comes amid fears that the breadth of online news, from Google and Facebook as well as the BBC, will ultimately lead to the death of both local and national newspapers.

Since 2007 a quarter of the UK's local papers – about 320



– have closed. They've been unable to cope with both readers and advertisers moving online.

Critics of the BBC say its news website contains so many lifestyle stories and celebrity gossip that it "bears no resemblance to the BBC's charter commitments".

Ofcom will examine

whether the website makes its content different enough from other news sources, including newspaper websites, and provide enough links to other sites, as it is legally required to do.

It will also look at how readers navigate the BBC's news website, and whether they believe it has "a distinctive format, mix of content, and depth of information".

The BBC said it covers entertainment and showbiz news because it is "of great interest to our audiences".

It added that links on the News website send "tens of thousands of internet users every week directly to the websites of other publishers".

TOMORROW'S WORLD

Listen to the voice assistant at www.genderlessvoice.com. Is it male or female? It's actually neither, created as a 'genderless' alternative to Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri (both female). Called 'Q', it was made with the help of 4,500 people who don't identify as male or female. Its developers say it fights the sexist stereotype that women are supposed to be helpful and nurturing.



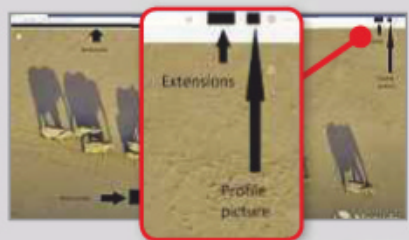
IN BRIEF

**PAY POSTHUMOUS
FACEBOOK 'TRIBUTES'**

Facebook has launched a Tributes section for friends and relatives to leave messages, photos and videos after a loved-one dies. It will appear on 'memorialised accounts', which have been preserved after the user has passed away. Facebook is testing it in the US, and could make it available worldwide.

**MICROSOFT'S EDGE IS A
CHROME CLONE**

Leaked images of Microsoft's redesigned Edge browser show features similar to Google's Chrome, whose **source code** it will be based on. The website Neowin published screenshots (pictured), pointing out that your extensions and profile photo will be placed top right, as in Chrome. The rebuilt Edge is still being tested by Microsoft employees before being launched fully, probably later this year.

**THE WORLD'S
GONE MAD!**

This poor chap is an unwitting participant in the latest YouTube craze: throwing slices of cheese on babies. The 'challenge' has gone viral online, meaning thousands of bored parents have filmed and uploaded their cheddar-flinging stupidity.



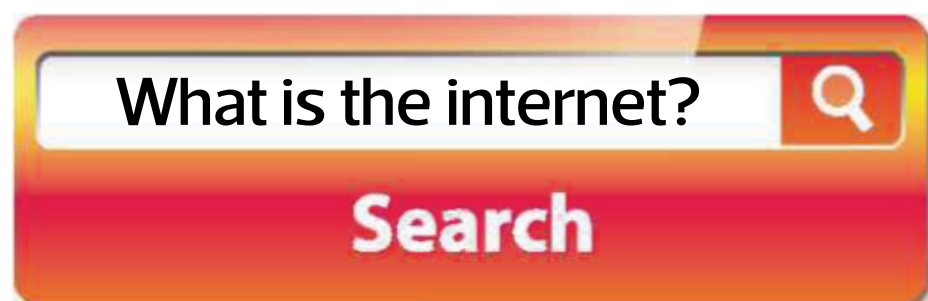
5.3m Brits don't use the web and will 'earn less money'

Around 10 per cent of the population are still not using the internet and lack essential digital skills, according to a new report on the UK's digital divide.

The Office of National Statistics' (ONS) survey of internet usage for 2018 classifies 5.3m people as "non-internet users" – described as those who have never been online, or haven't used the web in the past three months.

This is a slight drop from 2017 when 5.8m (11 per cent) didn't use the internet. Northern Ireland is the region with most non-users (14.2 per cent); London has the fewest (seven per cent).

As in previous years, over half of all adult non-users were aged over 75. Disabled people also make up a large proportion of non-users, at 56



per cent, much higher than the proportion of disabled adults in the UK as a whole, which is estimated to be 22 per cent.

People who live alone are less likely to have an internet connection. Nine per cent of households with a single adult aged between 16 and 64 years didn't have access to the web, compared with only one per cent of homes with two adults.

The difference is wider for older people. Around 41 per cent of households with a single adult aged 65 or over had no internet, compared with 13 per cent of homes

with two adults.

The ONS warned that people who remain "digitally excluded" will miss out on benefits such as cheaper prices online, and will fail to learn skills that make them more attractive to employers. These skills can lead to increased earnings of up to 10 per cent, the ONS said.

However, it added that with millions of people unwilling or unable to use the internet, some tasks must remain "non-digital" to allow "everyone to participate fully in society".

Read the ONS' report at www.snipca.com/30889.

Email scams rocket as malware falls

Phishing scams increased by 250 per cent in 2018 as criminals continued to devise more sophisticated methods of attack, Microsoft has said.

Its annual Security Intelligence Report claims that scammers use "a varied infrastructure with multiple points of attack", including domain spoofing and user impersonation (see box).

However, malware overall fell by 34 per cent, and **ransomware** in particular by around 60 per cent, which Microsoft says was down to improved detection of the threat, and better awareness of such scams among users.

As a result, hackers shifted

their focus to cryptocurrency mining, in which they exploit a victim's PC resources to make digital money.

In total, Microsoft scanned over 470 billion emails every month during 2018 for malware and phishing.



HOW SCAMMERS 'PHISH' YOU

Domain spoofing: the domain of the email exactly matches a genuine one.

User impersonation: the scammer impersonates someone you trust (eg, a solicitor).

Text lures: text messages on phones that look legitimate.

Credential phishing links: email links to web pages that look authentic.

Phishing attachments: malware contained in attachments sent by email.

Links to fake online storage: you're asked to sign into fake cloud-storage sites.

Not ‘incredible’ after all! Sky’s broadband adverts banned

The UK’s advertising watchdog has banned “misleading” TV adverts from Sky Broadband, as the tit-for-tat wars continue between ISPs over the speeds they offer customers.

In the adverts, broadcast last year, a Sky engineer tells a character from the animated Disney-Pixar film *The Incredibles 2*: “Right, I’ve made some adjustments and boosted your Sky Wi-Fi throughout your house”.

The character, a 10-year-old superhero called Dash, is then shown connecting to the web in the bathroom, kitchen and garage (in the car), before ending on the roof, saying: “The Wi-Fi even reaches the roof”.

In a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), BT and Virgin Media questioned whether Sky could back up the promise of “consistent” speeds in every room.

Sky denied that the adverts



made any claims about signal strength. Instead, it said the emphasis was on “reaching” rooms throughout the home, regardless of speed.

The company also said there were several improvements a Sky engineer can carry out to enhance Wi-Fi, such as relocating the router, upgrading it to a new model, and installing a wireless extender.

But the ASA said the advert didn’t make this clear, and that viewers would think it was promoting Sky’s broadband products, not the work of its technical team. It

noted that the advert ended with the slogan “Sky Broadband. Incredible Wi-Fi around your home”, without mentioning Sky’s technical team.

The ASA’s decision came a week after it banned a BT advert claiming its Smart Hub router delivers the “UK’s most powerful Wi-Fi vs major broadband providers”. It followed a complaint by Virgin Media who challenged whether the claim could be substantiated.

Have you stopped trusting broadband adverts? Let us know: letters@computeractive.co.uk

Record Skype calls online, but not in Firefox or Windows 7

You can now record video calls while chatting on the web version of Skype, but only if you use the tool on Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge on a Windows 10 PC.

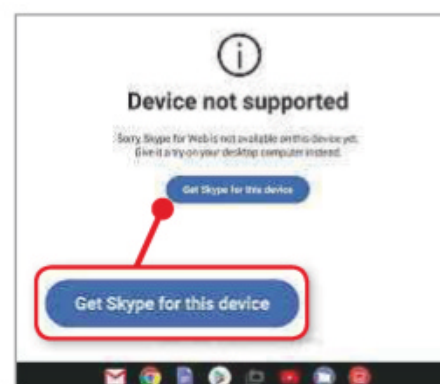
Microsoft has added video recording along with a range of other features, including high-definition calls and the option to search for messages (read more on Skype’s blog: www.snipca.com/30929). But none of these will be available on Firefox or Opera, or on any browser on a PC running Windows 7 or 8.1.

If you try to use ‘Skype for Web’ (<https://web.skype.com>)

on these platforms, you’ll be asked to download the desktop version instead (see screenshot), which has had these new tools since last year.

Launched in 2015, the online version of Skype lets you chat to people without having to download software. As long as you have a Microsoft account, you can invite people who don’t simply by sending them a unique link.

The decision to limit ‘Skype for Web’ to Chrome and Edge has surprised and disappointed many users of other browsers. Firefox’s



market share has dipped from a high of over 30 per cent in 2010 to under 10 per cent, but it retains millions of loyal users.

Less than two per cent of people use Opera, but it’s widely considered an influential browser, having often introduced tools later adopted by rivals.

IN BRIEF

VODAFONE NAMES 12 MORE 5G CITIES

Vodafone has announced which 12 further cities will receive its 5G service by the end of 2019, alongside the seven already named. It includes Blackpool, Guildford, Stoke and Wolverhampton. The company said its network will deliver speeds 10 times faster than 4G. For the full list of cities visit www.snipca.com/30933.

EXPLORE GOOGLE’S MUSEUM OF INVENTIONS

Videos and images from Bletchley Park (pictured), Nasa and Cern are among 200,000



online artefacts in Google’s new ‘Once Upon a Try’ site that celebrates “objects dreamt up and created by inventors, scientists and dreamers”. It contains items from 110 institutions from around the world, charting a “millennia of human progress”. To search the collection, visit www.snipca.com/30934 and scroll down for ideas, or click one of the top-right categories.

SIGN INTO FLICKR WITHOUT USING YAHOO

Flickr users no longer need to sign in using their Yahoo Mail account, after owners SmugMug said users can select new login details. Yahoo bought Flickr in 2005, forcing users to sign in with a Yahoo account two years later. SmugMug said removing the need for a Yahoo account has been the most-requested option from users since it acquired the site last April. For more details visit: www.snipca.com/30935.

Question of the Fortnight

Why did it take so long to remove NZ massacre video?

Footage was being shared online for hours after the shooting

Mass murderers seeking publicity have a new tool: live-streaming. They just need to log into a popular website, press record on their phone, then film the carnage.

The attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, was broadcast live for 17 horrifying minutes. It's alleged that the suspect, 28-year-old Australian Brandon Tarrant, had earlier urged other white supremacists to watch, guaranteeing a bloodthirsty audience.

Facebook scrambled to block the stream after being alerted by Christchurch police, but it was too late. Viewers had recorded the footage as it was broadcast, then spread it across the web. Many hours after the massacre, you only had to search for Tarrant's name to find the video on YouTube.

“Many hours after the massacre, you only had to search for Tarrant's name to find the video on YouTube”

Politicians condemned tech giants for reacting too slowly. Responding to a tweet from YouTube claiming it was “working vigilantly” to remove footage, Home Secretary Sajid Javid said tech companies must do more to stop fanatics promoting “violent extremism”. He later warned tech companies they “should be prepared to face the force of the law”.



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Facebook and others had “further questions” to answer about how they reacted.

Pressure will now grow on social-media firms to use better techniques to remove terrorist videos. They already use accurate algorithms that automatically prevent pre-recorded videos from

being uploaded. What's much harder is blocking footage being streamed live.

The problem is that algorithms are reactive, not predictive. They respond to an extremist video, photo or document by creating a digital fingerprint – called a hash – that flags up videos containing similar elements (such as a terrorist group's flag).

Facebook and Google (which owns YouTube) developed this method when Islamic State was peppering the web with sadistically violent videos. It allowed them to, for example, block footage of beheadings by comparing them to videos that had previously been uploaded.

But it's impossible to do this with videos as they are broadcast live. Only when videos are recorded and uploaded to the web can algorithms create a digital fingerprint to block similar videos in future.

However, some experts claim tech sites would have solved this problem if money was at stake. They point to the millions websites have already spent blocking copyrighted songs and videos, saying companies have acted because they're scared of being sued. Critics say sites must treat extremist material as seriously as copyrighted content.

Facebook and Google would say they already do. Both claimed to have worked overtime to take down footage

THE FACTS

- The attack on two mosques in Christchurch was streamed live online on Facebook for 17 minutes
- Facebook said it removed 1.5 million videos of the shooting in the first 24 hours
- Politicians have demanded tech sites do more to prevent extremist material being spread online

of the shooting. Facebook said it had removed 1.5 million videos in the first 24 hours, including 1.2 million that were prevented from being uploaded. Yet this means 300,000 videos of the massacre *were* posted online. If the site sees that as an effective response, it just goes to show how out of touch it is.

Perhaps the answer lies in better collaboration between tech companies. Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube already share research on methods to block terrorist material, having formed the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism in 2017.

But whatever they've worked on, it hasn't produced a method for preventing gunmen streaming attacks. They better develop one soon, because global outrage at the Christchurch attack has been directed not just at the shooter, but also at the sites where his footage appeared. Governments and the public alike want to know how Facebook, Twitter and Google can stop it happening again.

Protect your tech

Scams and threats to avoid, plus new security tools

WATCH OUT FOR...

Live chat in fake Office 365 site

What's the threat?

Scammers are using live-chat support on fake Office 365 websites to make them appear legitimate. Victims receive an email impersonating a Microsoft message asking them to renew their Office 365 subscription. It comes from 'MSOffice' at the email address info@officefamily.us (see screenshot right), which is fooling many people.

Clicking the 'Renew Now' button takes you to <https://mso365.tech>, which mimics (poorly) an official Microsoft site. After failing to log into your Office 365 account on the site, you may be tempted to seek help by clicking the live-chat option. If you do, the 'assistant' will ask for your log-in details.

One person who wasn't tricked was US security researcher Michael Gillespie. He recorded his chat with the scammer, giving a false email address and password. The fraudster abruptly ended the chat when Gillespie revealed that he



knew the site was a "phishing scam". You can watch how the chat unfolded at www.snipca.com/30886 – click your mouse to see each screenshot.

How can you stay safe?

Make a mental note that a live-chat support service is no guarantee that a site

is genuine. Gillespie reported the website to Tawk.to (www.tawk.to), which is the (legitimate) chat service the scammer used. It banned the account, although the fraudster has apparently returned with a new one. The website is still live, though Chrome prevents you from visiting it, showing a 'Deceptive site ahead' warning.

New tools | Google Play Protect

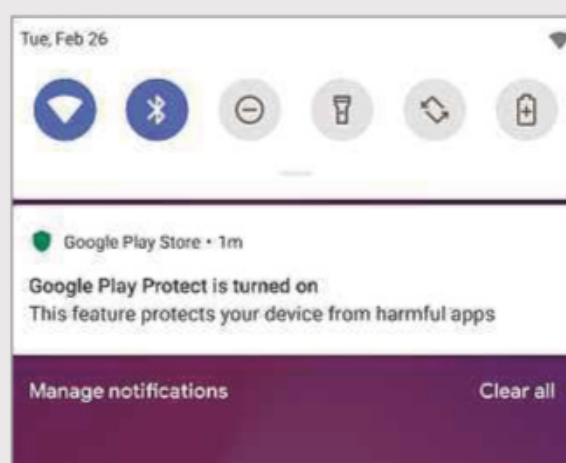
www.android.com/play-protect

Google has a hard job keeping dangerous apps out of its Play Store for Android. Every day last year it scanned 50 billion apps to check for malware.

It didn't always succeed (see Protect Your Tech, Issue 544), so we're pleased it has strengthened Android security by turning on Play Protect by default. This defends your phone and tablet against dodgy apps by warning you if you're about to install one.

To make sure it's switched on, tap your device's Google Play Store app, then tap Menu (three horizontal lines), Play Protect. If the slider is off, tap 'Scan device for security threats' so it turns blue. You should see a message confirming that it's working (see screenshot above).

Google has also added information to the warning message about why an



app may be unsafe. In its Security blog (www.snipca.com/30910), it gave the example of an app that can "damage your device, add hidden charges to your mobile bill, or steal your personal information". Spelling out the dangers like this makes it easier for users to understand the threat, Google said.

ScamWatch

Readers warn readers

Fake Windows 'virus alert'

A 'Windows Support Alert' (below) appeared on my laptop, locking my screen. I Googled the 'support' number (0800-051-3726). It seems to have been used as a scam for years. I used task manager (CTRL+ALT+DEL) to close my browser and shut down, restarted, cleared my browsing history and did an anti-virus scan.

Laurence Elvin



Warn your fellow readers about scams at letters@computeractive.co.uk

Letters

Tell us what's on your mind

1Gbps in schools? Fine, but ban phones too

✉ Giving schools faster 1Gbps broadband will be productive only if they also ban children bringing in phones (News, Issue 549, page 6). Kids being kids, they'll find ways to take advantage of the super-fast speeds.

In my day, we sat at the back of the class flicking through comics. What's to stop 21st-century pupils secretly watching hours of videos when the teacher isn't looking, or taking countless selfies? Phones have already been banned in France. My daughter who lives near Paris says everyone thinks it's a great idea. Why can't we follow suit here?

Mark Rudd

Custom-built PCs save you money

✉ I wonder if you've ever considered doing a piece on companies who make PCs and laptops to certain specifications, rather than pre-built from high-street shops and online?

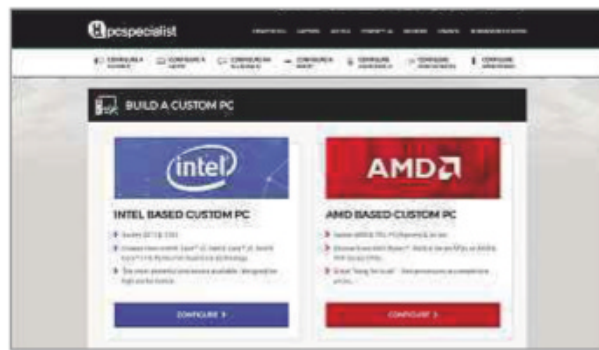
About six months ago I was after a new big-screen laptop and wanted the most powerful one I could get, but didn't want to spend more than £1,000. Anything remotely decent in places like PC World and Amazon was way over my budget. They seemed to have expensive things I didn't need, such as high-end **graphics cards**.

Instead I looked online for a site that would give you a fairly basic unit and then add what you want. Dell was one option, but the best I found was PC Specialist (see screenshot above right). It gave me the option to pick everything including screen size, processor, memory and hard drive. I ended up choosing a laptop with a 17in screen, an i7-8750H processor, 16GB of **RAM**, a 500GB **SSD**, and a 2TB hard drive for only £899!

The equivalent model is easily £1,500 online, with added bits I didn't need. So it shows that if you know roughly what you want, it's well worth checking out a custom-built unit.

Kevin Williams

CA SAYS Kevin's right. By picking only the components you need, you can save money custom-building your PC. There are lots of excellent British manufacturers that let you do this, including PC



Specialist (www.pcspecialist.co.uk), Chillblast (www.chillblast.com), Palicomp (www.palicomp.co.uk), Scan (www.scan.co.uk) and CyberPower (www.cyberpowersystem.co.uk).

However, it can be daunting working out which components will best suit your needs. How fast a processor should you choose? What size of hard drive do you need? What about graphics cards? To answer these questions, we're planning a comprehensive guide on custom-building a PC. Please let us know what kind of information you'd like us to include.

Get rid of default times for Active Hours

✉ Issue 549's 'Question of the Fortnight' ('Why is it so hard to update Windows 10?') hit the nail on the head when it said Microsoft cares more about business users than home users. That's why the default Active Hours for postponing updates are set during the working day.

But not *all* home users are offline during the day. I'm retired now, so when

it's too wet to go to the allotment or walk in the nearby dales (in the Peak District), I can end up spending hours using my computer during the day. Now I come to think of it, I've not had any unexpected restarts for the recent updates, presumably because my Active Hours were set by default from 8am to 5pm. I remember reading about this feature, but had forgotten all about it, and so haven't changed the hours.

Surely it can't be beyond the wit of Microsoft to remove the default, and simply ask users to set a time. I know that defaults are meant to make life easy for people, but they actually confuse them because they can't work out why their computer is behaving in a particular way. The solution is to have *no* defaults, leaving the hours blank. That will force people to make the decision themselves, and in doing so get a better understanding of what Active Hours is used for.

Leonard Moss

Thanks for helping me get a free router

✉ I've been a long-term customer of TalkTalk and, while they don't always get a good press, I've never had a problem with their broadband/TV service. I saw in Issue 548's 'Get a Faster Wi-Fi Router' Cover Feature that TalkTalk had a newer router than the Super Router I currently have. But there was no mention of it being available to current

Pay for old BBC shows? You must be joking!

✉ The BBC and ITV are mad if it thinks people are going to pay £5 a month to watch a bunch of old shows on BritBox. The principle will put many people off: why should you have to pay twice for the same content? I was paying my Licence Fee when *Fawlty Towers* was first broadcast in the Seventies, so why should I have to pay extra to watch it again?

Other viewers won't bother simply because they either already have the programmes on DVD, or watch the many repeats on channels like Gold and Dave. I've recorded loads of series



from both.

Netflix produces amazing, thought-provoking TV from just £6 a month. I watch it every night. BritBox, by the sound of it, will charge almost the same amount for a bunch of repeats. Big deal!

Warren Osborne

customers for £25 (not the full price of £120), as you state in the feature. I quoted your article to TalkTalk's customer services and they agreed to supply me with a router at that price, with nothing to pay for delivery.

So thanks for the article. Without having seen it, I wouldn't have known about the £25 offer from TalkTalk, because they don't make this obvious online. Keep up the good work.

Dave Miller

I was intending to contact my ISP regarding a new router and your 'Get a Faster Wi-Fi Router' article helped me on the way. I am with EE and its Bright Box 2 router wouldn't work properly with a CCTV camera situated at the other side of my dormer bungalow on the garage wall. The camera hardly ever stayed connected even with three Wi-Fi boosters from TP-Link.

I put my case to EE's help desk, and I received a new Smart Hub two days later. I am more than satisfied with it because the camera connects without problems.

David Butler

For some while now I'd been intending to speak with Sky about reducing my bill, but Issue 548's Cover Feature triggered me into action. As a result, I obtained a new Sky Q TV box, a new Sky Q hub, and an upgrade of my broadband package (six times faster), along with an existing landline and a modest new mobile-phone package, all for £11 per month less than my current bill.

Can we take this a step further? I now have a redundant Sky Hub (model SR101). Rather than recycling it, is there any way to use the old hub as a range extender or **hotspot** for my new hub? My house is made of brick, cinder block and a few steel girders, all reducing the range of any Wi-Fi signals.

Michael Bonehill

CA SAYS Great minds think alike, Michael! In Issue 522 (page 38) we explained how to turn an old router into an extender, while more recently, in Issue 545 (page 35), we showed how you can use old routers to create **mesh Wi-Fi** for



STAR LETTER

Banking 'bombshell' means I won't be able to shop online

I was interested to read Edmund Hobby's letter in Issue 548 ('Don't force difficult tech on disabled people'). I am 85 years old, deaf (and so can't use the phone), and confined to the house. I live in an area where there is no mobile signal and therefore no texting. The internet has been a saviour to people like me as I can order my groceries for delivery online, and email is my only contact with friends and family. Everything I need I can get online, and I do all my banking that way too.

But now I have been hit with a bombshell as Tesco and Capital One have both notified me that in future when ordering online I will have to prove my identity by getting a code number by phone for every transaction. This means I can no longer order online. Why is it that companies assume that everybody has access to everything, or is able to use everything?

This piece of over-the-top security is not only ridiculous but insulting to human intelligence. A potential



fraudster needs to have my address, my username, my password, and my credit-card details and PIN. Having hacked all these, why would he then order goods to be delivered to me at my home address? He must be a total idiot as are those who dream up these crackpot ideas.

Surely it is time that banks and other companies realise they are there for the convenience of customers, and that we are not guinea pigs for them to experiment on. Keep fighting our corner *Computeractive* because we need someone on the side of ordinary people.

William Rowe



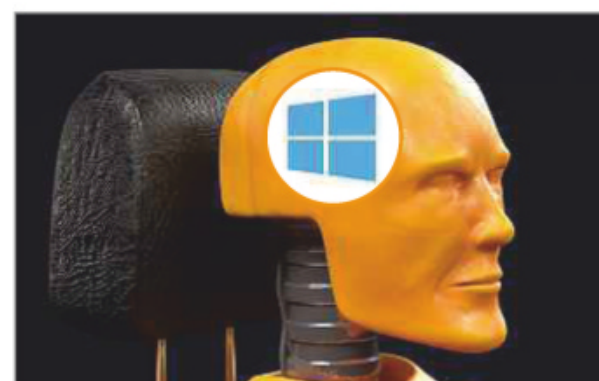
The **Star Letter** writer wins a **Computeractive** mug!

your home. Please let us know if you've found other uses for a router you no longer need.

I was a Windows 10 crash-test dummy

Earlier this year (Issue 545) you published my letter about the problems I was having updating Windows 10 from version 1803 to version 1809 (last year's October update). I promised an update when matters had been resolved.

I was due to speak to Microsoft's help



desk on 9 January, but before the call all problems had mysteriously vanished. Unbeknown to me, both my computers had updated to version 1803. I've now discovered that Microsoft are deciding which Windows 10 systems to block, based on the impact on users gained from monitoring their computers. If they detect that a computer may have problems, or be incompatible, updates will not install until that issue has been resolved. To see which updates for version 1809 have been blocked for this reason, visit Microsoft's site: www.snipca.com/30921.

I would appear to have been one of their 'crash-test dummies', and therefore had my computer rolled back to 1803. My laptop has now received five Dell updates over the past week, and successfully updated to version 1809 on 1 March 2019 - some five months late!

Andy Worrall



Can I sue Amazon for illegally signing me up to Prime?

LEAD
CASE



Q At the end of February I found I'd been signed up for a free month's trial for Amazon Prime. I went online to cancel, then told Amazon I would sue in the small claims court because it had acted illegally by signing me up without my permission. Amazon insisted that someone had used my account to access Prime Video. What should I do?

David Tootell

A We wouldn't advise suing Amazon – David would need to prove negligence and/or emotional distress, which would be very difficult.

The odds are stacked against him because he would have to demonstrate that Amazon signed him up specifically to defraud him, or that it incompetently handled his account. It would take a lot of effort and skill to persuade a judge of these.

Even in a civil court, the onus would be on David to prove that being signed up *wasn't* a simple error or technical glitch, or that nobody had hacked into his account (as Amazon claims). Were he to prove this, he'd still need to establish loss of money, but he cancelled his account before having to pay.

What about the distress David suffered on finding he'd been signed up without his knowledge? A claim for negligence can be extended to include emotional distress, but the courts tend to award compensation for this only in exceptional cases. We think David wouldn't meet the criteria.

However, we've forwarded his complaint to Amazon and asked the company to contact him because we're concerned someone may have hacked into his account, using this free trial of Prime to stream videos. It should be able to find out who it was, giving David some peace of mind.



CASE CLOSED

Do manufacturers have to update driver files?

Q During an early Windows 10 update, I (among many others) suffered major program losses. Over the succeeding months I managed to reinstall most of these, but I haven't been able to locate a replacement **driver** for my Medion M101-CBJ mouse. Shouldn't Medion update these drivers?

John Green

A Like all peripheral manufacturers, Medion won't update drivers for Windows if they decide a particular model is obsolete. It's frustrating and seems unfair, but there's nothing you can do about this. Manufacturers don't have to guarantee that their products work with new software, whether it's an updated operating system or a revamped program.

We searched for the mouse on Medion's driver download site (www.snipca.com/30904), but got no results. We've emailed Medion to ask if it has updated the drivers for the mouse, pointing out that it's hard to get through to anyone on the company help line (0333 3213106). We were automatically cut off each time, as John was too. If we have any response, we'll let you know.

CASE ONGOING

CASE UPDATE

PayPal refunds reader stuck in China-Yodel limbo



This update concerns two recurring themes in recent Consumeractive cases: being ignored by Chinese sellers, and companies refusing to take responsibility for guaranteeing safe delivery of an item.

Reader Andy Rook was struggling to get a refund from PayPal after shelves he bought on eBay were delivered by courier Yodel to the wrong address (see Issue 547). He asked the seller to look into it, but it didn't respond (as is not uncommon for sellers in China).



Next he tried PayPal, but it wanted proof from Yodel that the shelves went to a wrong address. Yodel refused, citing data privacy. None of this was Andy's fault. It's never

down to the customer to chase a missing item; it's the retailer's duty. We reminded PayPal of this, pointing out that Andy was stuck in limbo between a seller that wasn't replying to him and a courier that wouldn't reveal where the shelves were sent.

We told PayPal that Andy could take his case to the Financial Ombudsman, to investigate whether the company was being fair to him. This seemed to work, and PayPal refunded him under its Buyer Protection scheme (www.snipca.com/30922).

Contact us so we can investigate your case

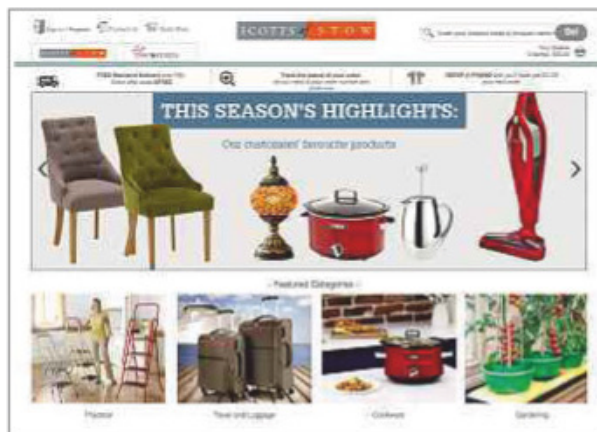
✉ **Email:** consumeractive@computeractive.co.uk
Please include your name, phone number and address.

How can I get company to hear my complaint?

Q I bought a phone and dehumidifier from Scotts of Stow's online catalogue (www.scottsofstow.co.uk) in October last year. Both products were faulty and there was no problem returning them. I've got the £159.95 refund for the dehumidifier, but despite lots of promises Scotts has failed to reimburse me the £79.96 for the phone. The problem is it repeatedly tells me it has. Can you help get it to listen?

Derek Wellings

A We contacted Derek to offer our help, but he told us that the day before Scotts had apologised and



promised the money would be refunded within three days.

So how did he finally manage to get through to Scotts?

Although he'd written to us and

The Times and contacted Trading Standards, he didn't know whether he'd get a response. So he went online and found the contact details of the chief executive Nigel Swabey, then emailed him to complain. This approach of going to the top worked for Derek, as it often has for many *Computeractive* readers.

If you're in a similar position, search for the company at CEOemail.com (www.ceoemail.com). The site is more effective than it looks. Also try CustomerCare.org (www.customercare.org), which provides a complaint form that it sends to the firm's boss.

CASE CLOSED

Can I get a refund for fake memory card?

Q Last May I bought a SanDisk memory card from an eBay seller with a 10-year warranty from SanDisk. In February it became faulty so I contacted SanDisk, who told me the card was counterfeit. The seller's ignoring my emails and neither eBay nor PayPal will help, so is there any way I can get redress?

Frank Lay

A Legally, the eBay seller (who we're not naming for legal reasons), should give Frank a full refund or send him a genuine SanDisk memory card. But we'd only expect the seller to do this if they were legitimate and sold Frank a fake card by mistake, and had therefore *also* been the victim of a scam.

Both eBay and PayPal have buyer-protection policies that refund customers who buy fake goods, but they apply only



for the first six months after purchase. Frank is well outside this limit.


We suggest Frank leaves the seller negative feedback about the problem. This public shaming may motivate the seller (assuming they're genuine) to get in touch with Frank, and possibly refund him. When Frank forwards

us more information about the seller we'll do a bit of investigating and also talk to SanDisk, hoping for a goodwill gesture.

CASE ONGOING

CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

Vodafone's 50GB gave web access

 Early one recent Saturday morning the dreaded red light on my Vodafone router started flashing. I carried out all the usual checks without success.

My call to Vodafone was answered immediately by an assistant called Ahmet. He carried out tests and identified an outage in my area. He added 50GB of data to my mobile phone to allow me internet coverage until the problem was fixed. This allowed me to use my mobile as a hotspot connection for

my computer. Vodafone had the outage fixed by noon the same day. I got a call back checking all was well and to tell me that I could keep the extra data. Fantastic service!

Can I add that I live in a rural town in Scotland and enjoy consistently high speed coverage from Vodafone's broadband.

Jim Davidson

✉ Has a company impressed you with its customer service? Please let us know: editor@computeractive.co.uk



Contact:
Vodafone

• **Phone:** 0808 040 8408
• **Live chat:** www.snipca.com/30906

Grow Your Family Tree



When you can't work out who's who, use **Nick Peers'** recommended software to...

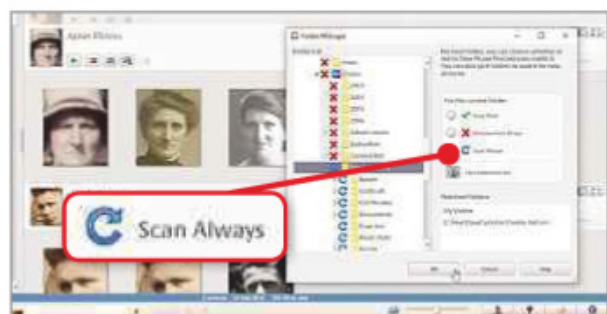
Automatically identify faces in photos

Readers David Lawes recently emailed us with a good question: "Is there software that will analyse a known face, and then allow comparison with unknown faces?" He's keen to compare photos of his grandparents in later life with those that may show them in younger years.

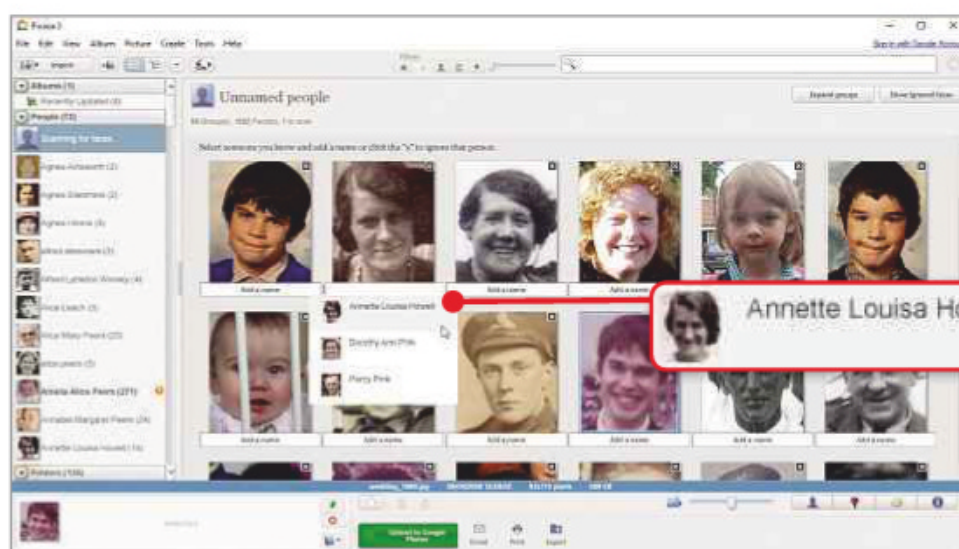
In the past, we'd have recommended Family Tree Builder, the free program from MyHeritage.com. Sadly, the current version appears to have dropped the facial-recognition tool that let you quickly scan photos looking for similar faces to match.

Download old favourite Picasa

Programs offering facial recognition are surprisingly thin on the ground. To find what David needs, we've been forced to



Select 'Scan Always' and Picasa will scan your photos looking for a match



Click 'Add a name' to see Picasa's suggestions – in this case, 'Annette Louisa Howell'

go back to a program that's been discontinued – Google Picasa.

The good news is that you can still download Picasa – from www.snipca.com/30875 – and that it works in Windows 10. After launching, Picasa will offer to scan your desktop, My Pictures and My Documents folders for photos – click OK and then choose Tools, Folder Manager.

Select each folder in turn, then choose 'Remove from Picasa'. Browse to the folder containing your family history photos, then select Scan Always and click OK (see screenshot left).

Now leave Picasa to scan through your photos. Keep an eye on the Unnamed

section at the top of the People list – click here to view a list of identified faces. Select a familiar face, type the person's name to create a new entry, then press Enter and click New Person followed by OK.

Link photos to individuals

After you've created a few names they'll appear as suggestions when you click 'Add a name' next to a person's entry (screenshot above). The suggestions will grow more accurate as you identify more faces.

You'll also see names appearing in the People list in the left-hand pane. Select one and you'll discover Picasa is starting to link faces to names based on earlier matches. Click the 'x suggestions' box to view those it wants you to confirm, then use the tick and cross boxes to accept or reject individual photos.

Alternatively, click 'Confirm all' if they're all correct. If a photo is incorrect, you can also right-click it and select 'Move to New Person' to match it to the correct person.

Once you've cleared a load of suggestions, return to the Unknown section to match more faces to people. Our experience using Picasa makes us confident that it will be able to help you link individuals to both older and younger versions of themselves.

Your Genealogy Problems Solved

I'm trying to find proof of an Irish marriage between my paternal grandmother (Annie Henderson, born in London) and grandfather (William Lyons). Can you help?

Jim Lyons

Jim gave us useful background detail, which helped locate Annie's entries in the Irish 1901 and 1911 censuses (www.census.nationalarchives.ie). This revealed 1901 as a likely marriage date. A search in

the Irish Marriages records at Find My Past showed Annie Henderson was married in 1901. The site automatically cross-referenced her entry with all eligible males, and sure enough William Lyons appeared as one of four matches. Armed with this information, Jim can now order a certificate from www.certificates.ie.



Have a genealogy question for Nick? Email letters@computeractive.co.uk with 'Grow Your Family Tree' in the subject line.

Get £20 off using code CA20 at the checkout



HYPER  LIQUID



CUSTOM BUILD **GAMING PCs**

WWW.CYBERPOWERSYSTEM.CO.UK

Follow Us!    @CYBERPOWERUK |  @CYBERPOWER_UK

All Desktop systems come with 3 year Limited Warranty + lifetime toll free tech support
Unit B11, Kingsway Interchange, Eleventh Avenue, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE11 0JY CyberPowerPC, CyberPowerPC Logo and, Unleash The Power are trademarks of CyberPower Inc. Copyright © 2013 CyberPower. All rights reserved. All prices are subject to change without notice or obligation. Celeron, Celeron Inside, Centrino Inside, Centrino Logo, Core Inside, Intel, Intel Logo, Intel Core, Intel Inside, Intel Inside Logo, Intel Viiiv, Intel vPro, Itanium, Itanium Inside, Pentium, Pentium Inside, Viiiv Inside, vPro Inside, Xeon, and Xeon Inside are trademarks of Intel Corporation in the U.S. and other countries. CyberPower is not responsible for any typographical or photographic errors. NVIDIA®, nForce®, GeForce®, SLI™ are trademarks or registered trademarks of NVIDIA Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries.

Intel Inside®.
Extraordinary
Performance
Outside.



Best Free Software

Will Stapley recommends new programs that won't cost you anything

SYSTEM TOOL

Winaero Tweaker

www.snipca.com/31001

What you need: Windows 7, 8.1 or 10

As much as we love the ability to tweak almost every aspect of Windows, its settings are scattered over multiple menus, making them hard to find. Winaero Tweaker simplifies things by bundling them together in a single menu. It's not the only Windows tweaker available (see also Ultimate Windows Tweaker, www.snipca.com/31000), but it's the most comprehensive and easiest to use.

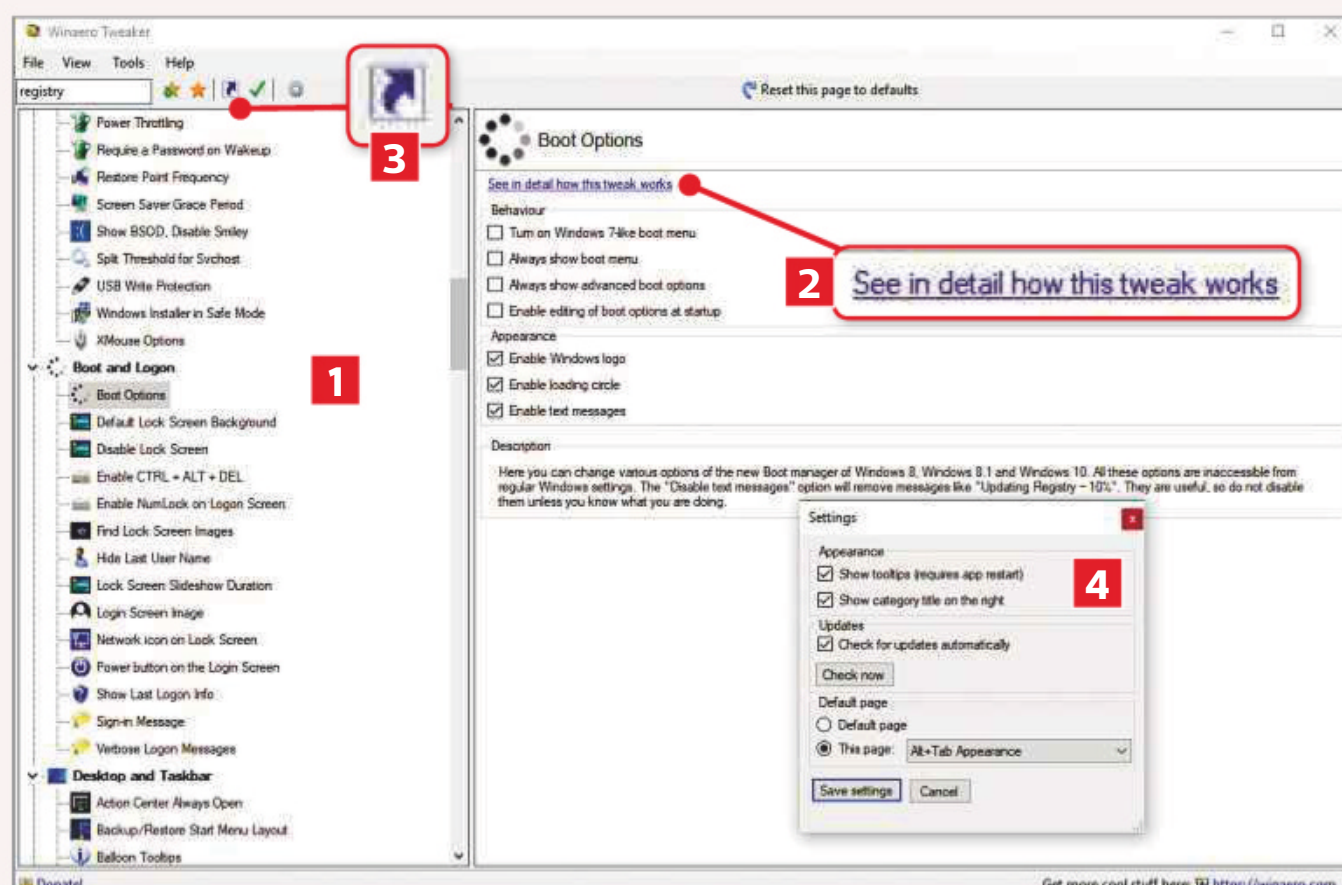
Winaero Tweaker has a simple design, with all available tweaks arranged in categories that are listed down the left-hand side. These include Appearance (change colours, animations, and so on), Behavior (disable tools such as Windows Timeline) and Boot (remove the Windows lock screen, change the lock-screen image, and so on). Scrolling through these to find what you want can take a while, so we recommend using the search box at the top if you're looking for a specific setting.

This version (0.14) adds a range of new tools, including

the Context Menu section, which lets you quickly add or remove items from Windows' right-click menu. This means you can get rid of those annoying default context menu items you never use, as well as adding new ones such as displaying the Clipboard History tool (introduced in the Windows October Update last year), killing all unresponsive programs and encrypting files. You can also now create desktop shortcuts to your most-used tweaks.

Other minor improvements in this version include bug fixes and the ability to specify the default landing page when the program opens. When you run it for the first time, you also see the option to skip installation and run Winaero Tweaker as a portable program.

To download it and avoid sneakily embedded adverts click the Download Winaero Tweaker link halfway down the page (just above the orange Donate button).



1 Tweakable settings are divided into categories in the left-hand panel. Use the search box at the top left to quickly find specific settings.

2 When you select a setting, the options are listed in the main panel. If you want to find out more about a setting, click the 'See in detail how this tweak works' link at the top.

3 If you tend to use one particular setting more than others, select it, then click this button. A new desktop shortcut will appear that you can double-click to open the setting in WinAero.

4 You can tweak how WinAero works, including assigning the landing page when you launch the program. Access these settings by going to Tools, then Preferences.



DVD CATALOGUING

EMDB 3.38

www.snipca.com/31008

What you need: Windows 7, 8.1 or 10

DVDs might be going out of fashion, but most of us still have shelves full of our favourite films. If you want to make sense of your collection, EMDb does all the hard work for you. Simply enter the film's title, click Search IMDb, then choose your film from the results. EMDb will then import the DVD cover, the year it was made, actors, genre and much more. You can also add your own fields, such as when you bought it and how many times you've watched it. Once you've added all your films, you can search your collection based on any data and even use it to keep track of DVDs you've lent to other people. Version 3.38 is the latest in a series of updates over the past few weeks, introducing scheduled backups of your database and the ability to use network-attached storage.



MUSIC TOOL

AnvilStudio 2019

www.snipca.com/31011

What you need: Windows 7, 8.1 or 10

AnvilStudio is a superb music creation and editing tool for both virtuoso and budding musicians. You create your compositions by adding tracks for each instrument, then use the on-screen keyboard to play and record the notes, which appear on the score at the top of the screen as you play. You can also connect a MIDI-compatible instrument to your computer (such as an electronic keyboard) and AnvilStudio will record from it directly. Although AnvilStudio is free, some features cost extra - for example, if you want to print high-resolution scores, you'll need to buy the Print Sheet add-on, which costs £30. New features include setting more precise tempos for your tracks (up to two decimal places) and support for high-contrast displays.



WHAT SHOULD I DOWNLOAD?

We tell you what software & apps to use

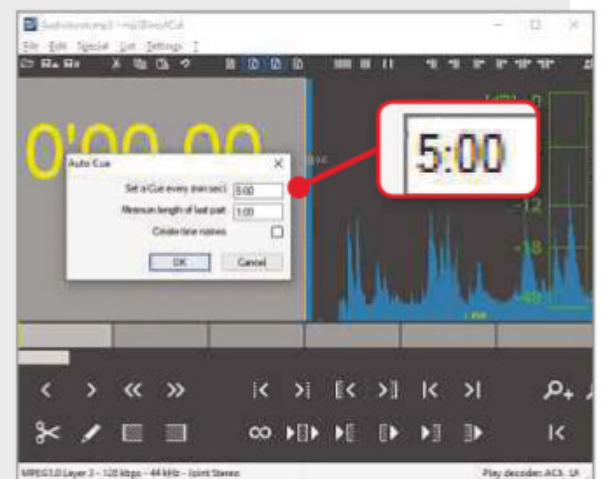
How can I split audiobooks into smaller files?

Q I enjoy listening to audiobooks on my computer, but often forget where I left off. Can you recommend software that splits my audiobooks into smaller, more manageable files?

J C Wright

A Instead of splitting your audiobooks, you could use the bookmarking feature in VLC (www.videolan.org). First, open your audiobook in VLC by pressing Ctrl+O. When you're ready to create a bookmark, press Ctrl+B, click Create, then Close. You then need to save your audiobook as a playlist (otherwise your bookmarks will be lost when you close VLC). Press Ctrl+Y to do this. When you next want to listen to your audiobook, open the playlist you saved rather than the original file, then access your saved bookmarks by pressing Ctrl+B.

If you still want to split audiobooks into smaller files, one of the simplest tools is mp3DirectCut (www.snipca.com/31016). Open your audiobook (Ctrl+O), then select 'Auto Cue...' in the Special menu. You need to specify the length of each segment in the 'Set a Cue...' box. For example, to split the audiobook into five-minute segments, enter 5:00 (see screenshot). Click OK, then save the segments as individual files by selecting 'Save split...' in the File menu.



You may also want to try mp3DirectCut's pause-detection feature, which scans your audiobook and splits it whenever there's an extended pause (for example at the beginning of a chapter). The success of this depends on your particular audiobook, but it's worth trying. Click the Special menu, then 'Pause detection...'. Try the default settings first. If you get too many splits, increase the 'Min. duration' setting (this specifies how long a pause needs to be before a split is created).

Do you need our advice on what software to use? Just email us at letters@computeractive.co.uk

HOW I USE...

LibreOffice Writer

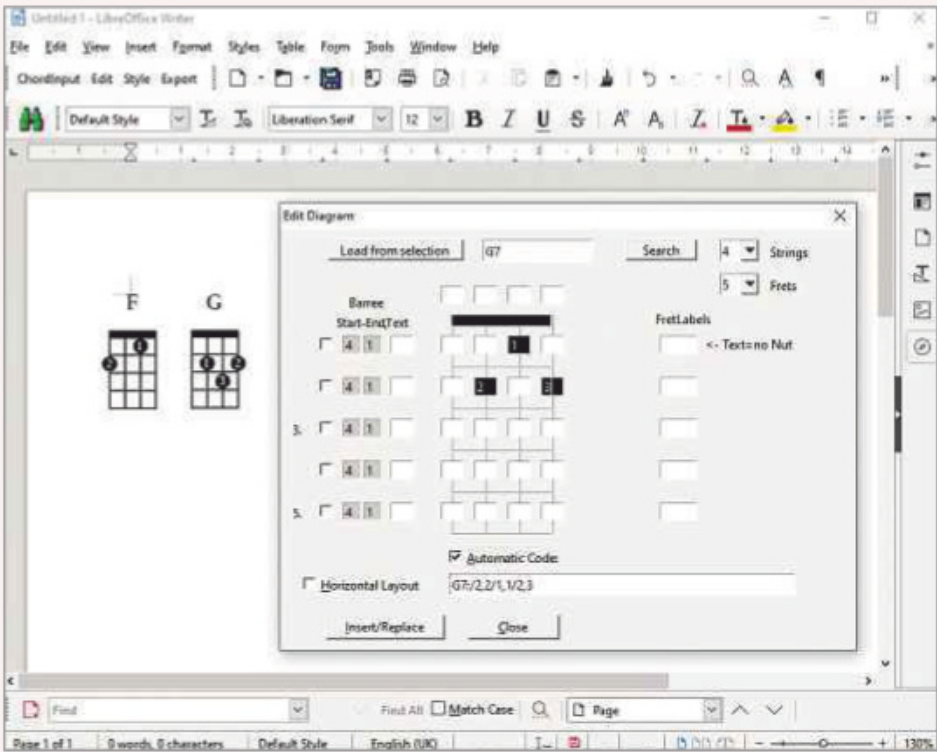
For Will Stapley, LibreOffice Writer more than holds its own against the might of Word



It might be bloated with features that I'll never use and owned by a company that wants to track my every move, but I still like Microsoft Word. However, while I've got a copy of it on my work laptop, I've not been eligible for Microsoft's student discount for many years, meaning I'd have to pay £120 for the downloadable Office suite (www.snipca.com/31003) to get it on each of my home PCs. Alternatively, I could sign up for an £60 annual Office 365 subscription (www.snipca.com/31005). But with the **open-source** LibreOffice Writer (www.libreoffice.org) offering almost everything Word provides (and a few things it doesn't), why on earth would I do that?

Writer's interface may look a little dated, but at least I feel I'm the one in control. When Microsoft introduced the ribbon menu in Word 2007, many users were left confused by the radical new menu structure. Writer may be 10 years behind Word in this respect (it only recently added ribbon-style menus in version 6), but it had the good sense to offer it as an option, rather than force it on users.

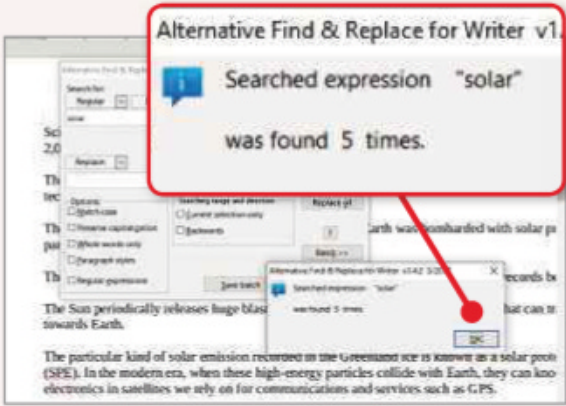
I prefer the new ribbon menu in Writer, but appreciate being able to quickly switch back to the old version when I crave a little familiarity. To change its menu layout, select User



Will is using the ChordDiagrams extension to teach his kids how to play the ukelele

Interface in the View menu, then choose from the five options (you'll need the latest LibreOffice 6.2 to see the new Tabbed ribbon menu).

Word has a decent selection of **add-ins**, but it doesn't match the range offered by Writer. I recently uncovered music-learning aid ChordDiagrams (www.snipca.com/30995, see screenshot above) and I'm using it to help my children learn to play the ukulele (George Formby, eat your heart out). Like many LibreOffice extensions, working out how to use it is often a case of trial and error – but there's no equivalent for Word.



Alternative Find & Replace is far more powerful than Word's built-in tool

Alternative Find & Replace (www.snipca.com/30996) is another Writer extension I've come to rely on. It does so much more than Word's built-in equivalent, such as quickly calculating the number of times a particular word or phrase appears in a document (see screenshot above). It even runs multiple find and replace commands at the same time.

My only quibble with the extension is that I can't find a way to make it override Writer's built-in 'Find & Replace' tool (press Ctrl+H), so I have to run it from the toolbar at the top.

WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE IN WRITER

I often find myself getting lost in longer documents (especially when I'm writing our Cover Features). Writer lets me quickly jump to specific pages using the Ctrl+Alt+F5 keyboard shortcut, but it doesn't offer anything similar to Word's Split View tool, which shows

two sections of the same document simultaneously. I can always open it in a new window in Writer (by selecting New Window in the Window menu), but it's not as handy as Word's alternative. Hopefully this will be addressed in a future update.

Named & Shamed

Jonathan Parkyn puts the boot into tech villains, jargon-spouting companies and software stuffed with junk



WARNING: JUNK AHEAD

Junk offender: FileZilla

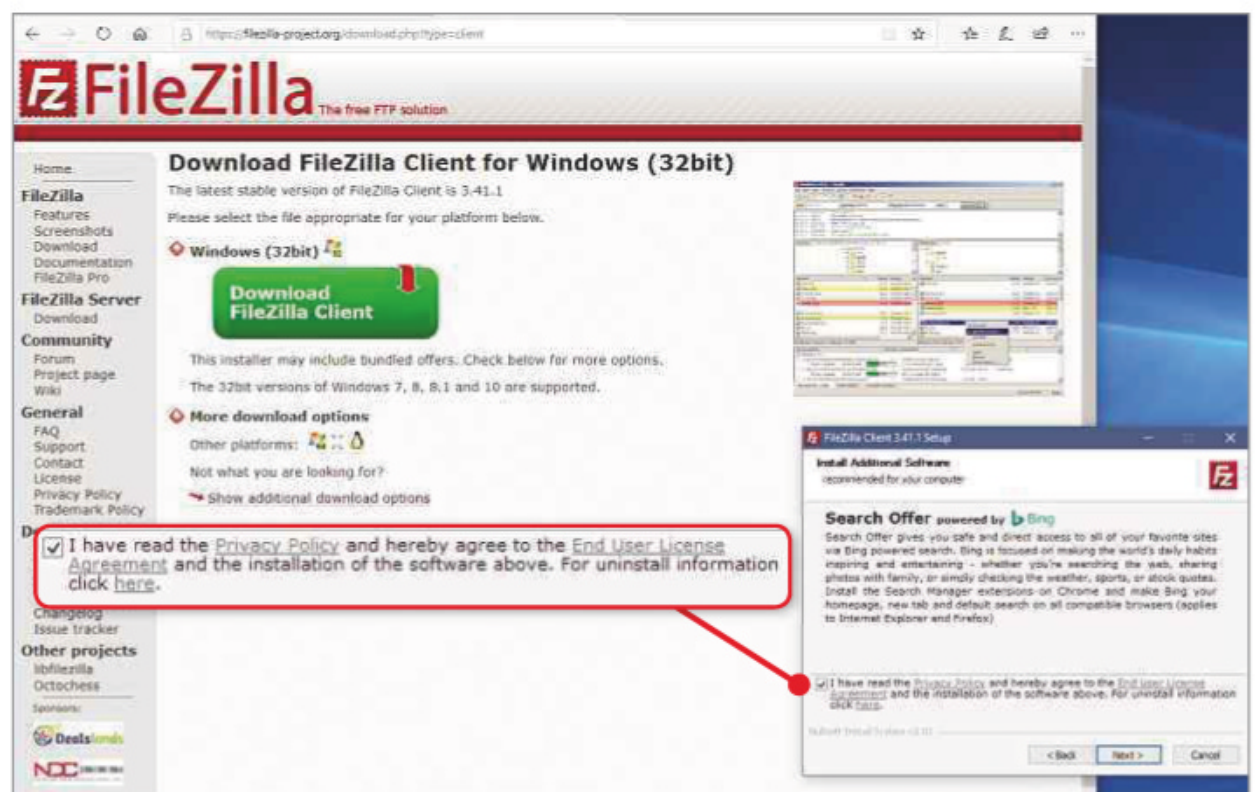
Don't you just hate it when something you've personally recommended ends up letting you down? For years, I've been praising FileZilla. It's an **FTP** tool that lets you securely transfer files to and from online servers – essential if you're running your own website, for example. Although it's pretty old (it launched in 2001), FileZilla is safe, regularly updated, fast and relatively straightforward. And being **open-source**, it's also free.



But there's a problem. I read online that FileZilla's developer has started bundling junk into its installer. I tested it for myself and, sure enough, the program's installer tried to trick me into installing several tools, including McAfee WebAdvisor, the browser Opera, and something called Search Offer from Microsoft's Bing.

The installer uses misleadingly worded tickboxes that makes it look like you're agreeing to the privacy policy of FileZilla itself when, in fact, you're basically allowing the installer to add whatever it likes to your PC (see screenshot).

It's galling, since the other thing I



Oh, FileZilla, why did you try to trick us into installing junk? Such a disappointment...

recommend is for users to make sure they download free software from reputable sources – like the developer's own website. But you're still lumbered with this flotsam even if you install FileZilla from the official site (<https://filezilla-project.org>).

It also backs my argument for downloading the portable versions of tools, when possible, because there's no

junk in the portable version of FileZilla (available by clicking 'Show additional download options' on the tool's download page and selecting the zip file).

I might start to recommend CyberDuck (<https://cyberduck.io>) from now on. Like FileZilla, it's a fast and free FTP tool. But unlike FileZilla, it doesn't try to trick you into cramming your PC with clutter.

WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?



WHAT THEY SAY

Microsoft's Windows team

www.snipca.com/30926

"To understand the quality of each update through data, we divide the feature set of Windows into distinct areas defined by the customer experience. Building on the ability to count unique 'active' devices each month, we then focus on the success of the upgrade process and general health of the user experience..."

WHAT THEY MEAN

We improve Windows updates based on how people install them.

JONATHAN'S VILLAIN OF THE FORTNIGHT

Facebook



When will Facebook stop wantonly abusing people's personal data? Among all the other revelations about the site, it's easy to miss the recent discovery that Facebook's **two-factor authentication** (2FA) potentially exposes your mobile phone numbers.

In what seems to be an astonishing breach of trust – even for Facebook – its 2FA system, which is supposed to protect your account by adding an extra layer of security, actually

compromises your privacy by allowing others to look you up using your mobile number.

Worse, it's not even possible to opt out. The setting can't be disabled and the only thing you can do is limit exposure to your existing Facebook friends. As yet, Facebook has shown no signs of fixing this. We'll let you know when it does. Until then, brace yourself for more security breaches from the site that knows no shame.

PC | £699 from PC Specialist www.snipca.com/30925

PC Specialist Apollo S2

Dark horse

In America, they have this thing called a Renaissance Faire. It's basically a cross between a funfair and a farmer's market, vaguely themed on Elizabethan England. Costumes and references may stray into other periods, random European countries, anything faintly olde-worlde, or the *Lord of the Rings*, but the essential element of a Renaissance Faire is that everything must be depicted not as it would have appeared in real life, but as a cheesy 1960s Hollywood film would have depicted it.

“A much faster PC than we were seeing in this price bracket even a year ago”

It's impossible to see the Apollo S2's tower case without being reminded of a knight's helmet from a Renaissance Faire. With its intimidating combination of raven-black plastic, enigmatic grilles and heraldic diagonal styling, it would be entirely at home on the head of a regional sales manager jousting as Sir Godfrey Dragonlord. It may be less at home on your desk.

Ignore that, though, because what's really inside is a very cost-effective set of

PC components. Although its version of the GeForce GTX 1060 **graphics card** has only 3GB of memory, which might limit some future 3D games and creative software, it beat both the 4GB 1050 Ti and the 8GB AMD RX 570 in our tests. It not only did justice to high-quality Full HD graphics but delivered a commendable score of 7.4 out of 11 in **SteamVR**, making it a feasible budget choice for running a virtual reality headset.

Compared with the similarly priced systems we tested last issue (from Palicomp and Mesh), which used the above graphics units, its main processing power fell slightly behind. That's because PC Specialist has used the same Ryzen 5 2600 processor as the Mesh Matrix Ryzen Pro, but with the smaller 8GB memory capacity of the Palicomp AMD Abyss RYZ6, which uses the faster 2600X. In basic tasks there's no difference, but with more ambitious software and multitasking, either 16GB or the 2600X gets you an edge. Even so, this is a much faster PC than we were seeing in this price bracket even a year ago, and ready for a wide range of work.

The 256GB **SSD**, installed in the motherboard's single **M.2** socket, provides only half the storage of some we see at this price, which could be an issue if you want to keep files such as video footage on it for fast access as well as Windows 10 and your programs. But with **read speeds** of up to 2,301 megabytes per second (MB/s) in our tests, it's very quick, helping to avoid delays in general use.

And you get a big 2TB hard drive as well, which should be plenty for most people's files.

SPECIFICATIONS

3.4GHz AMD Ryzen 5 2600 6-core processor • 8GB memory • 3GB Nvidia GeForce GTX 1060 graphics • 256GB SSD • 2TB hard drive • 5x USB 3.0 ports • 3x USB 2.0 ports • Gigabit Ethernet • HDMI, DVI and DisplayPort outputs • Windows 10 Home • 415x192x418mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/30925



There's limited room for expansion, with no free **PCIe** slots and no external ports faster than 5Gbps. A basic **802.11n** Wi-Fi card is included as standard, with two aerials to screw into the back panel; this is a handy fallback although you'd get faster networking by cabling the Gigabit Ethernet port to your router. The graphics card has all three common monitor outputs. All round, it's hard to find fault with the way your 699 quid's been spent here, milady.

VERDICT It's not the very fastest or most future-proof system, but there's a lot of performance here at a reasonable price

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE

Palicomp AMD Abyss **£700** This has twice the SSD, the superior Ryzen 5 2600X and a slower, but 8GB, RX 570 graphics card



LAPTOP | £1,811 from Scan www.snipca.com/30882

Scan 3XS LG15 Vengeance Max-Q RTX

Best served cold

Last year Nvidia's GTX 10-series **graphics cards** blitzed the market with dramatically higher performance than we'd seen in everyday PCs before, and now the RTX 20 series is here. Don't get too excited, though, because this isn't another quantum leap in all-round graphics performance. The 'R' stands for 'raytracing', which means rendering the lighting in a 3D scene by, as you might guess, calculating the path of rays of light.

“A laptop with high-end desktop PC performance”

When game developers make use of this, you'll see extraordinarily realistic scenes. When they don't, or you're not playing 3D games because you bought the PC for something else, you'll see nothing that you wouldn't have with the equivalent 10-series cards – including a return on the extra money you spent, which at the moment could be a hundred quid.

Here's a laptop, though, that pairs a new RTX 2070 with Intel's six-core i7-8750H processor, a 15.6in Full HD screen, lots of storage and a fine keyboard. This is for a price that, while fairly eye-watering, is far from outrageous for a desktop-class laptop. At 2kg and a hair under 2cm thick, it really is quite portable, too – the



catch being that the battery lasted just three-and-a-half hours in our video playback test. It'll run down even faster in more demanding work, but in return you get high-end desktop performance.

Although the Max-Q version of the 2070 is limited in performance by heat management, Scan's chunkier choice of chassis lets it run much faster than the GTX 1070 in the skinny Razer Blade 15.

The LG15 Vengeance Max-Q RTX has a lot to offer. The screen isn't particularly bright, but covered a reasonable 87 per cent of **sRGB** in our tests, with high accuracy within that – not quite enough for professional photo or video editors, but fine for a wide range of work and entertainment, with a rock-steady 144Hz **refresh rate**.

The mechanical keyboard, which uses clicky 'brown' switches, will divide opinion, but programmable RGB backlighting lets you set the colour of each key, and there's a numeric keypad, although we'd have liked a gap between this and the main keys. The trackpad is smallish, but precise, recognises all the Windows 10 **gestures**, and can be turned off if it distracts. The built-in speakers are poor, and the fans can get loud, making headphones a doubly wise idea. That aside, there's little here not to like.

SPECIFICATIONS

2.2GHz Intel Core i7-8750H processor • 16GB memory • 8GB RTX 2070 graphics • 500GB SSD • 2TB hard drive • 15.6in 1920x1080-pixel screen • Webcam • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 5 • USB Type-C port • 2x USB 3.0 ports • USB 2.0 port • HDMI and Mini DisplayPort outputs • Gigabit Ethernet • SD card reader • Windows 10 Home • 19.9x359x243mm (HxWxD) • 2.0kg • Two-year warranty
www.snipca.com/30882



HOW WE TEST

Computeractive is owned by Dennis Publishing, which employs a team of specialist technical reviewers. You'll often read references to our benchmark testing, which is a method of assessing products using the same criteria. For example, we test the speed of every PC and the battery life of every phone and tablet in exactly the same way. This makes our reviews authoritative, rigorous and accurate.

Dennis Publishing also owns the magazines *PC Pro*, *Computer Shopper* and *Web User* and the websites Expert Reviews (www.expertreviews.co.uk) and Alphr (www.alphr.com). This means we can test thousands of products before choosing the most relevant for *Computeractive*.

FAIR AND IMPARTIAL

Our writers follow strict guidelines to ensure the reviews are fair and impartial. The manufacturer has no involvement in our tests.

OUR AWARDS



We award every product that gets five stars our Buy It! stamp of approval. It means we were

extremely impressed by the product, and we think you will be too.



Every product that gets a four-star review is given the Great Pick award. We highly recommend these products, although they just fail to meet the high standard of our Buy It! winners.

PRICES

Our reviews contain a link to the best price we found online at the time of press.

VERDICT We'll see later if software can eke broader benefits out of RTX, but this is a convincing system at a fair price

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE Razer Blade 15

£2,449 Even at this price for a similar spec, the hard drive is missing. Slimmer costs more



Extend your home Wi-Fi

Repeaters and powerline adapters pick up the signal from your router and cast it into hard-to-reach corners. But which is best?

In the last couple of years we've talked a lot about mesh routers, like BT's Whole Home Wi-Fi. These replace the single wireless router, which does its best to send signals all round your house, with a set of two to four boxes spread around.

Mesh routers are pricey, though, at around £200 to £450, and they're not always the best solution where you're getting decent reception except for one tricky spot. There are two alternatives: repeaters and powerline adapters.

A Wi-Fi repeater is like a router, but instead of connecting to your broadband via a cable, it connects to your existing Wi-Fi router, then passes on the data to and from nearer devices. The clever part is that it shows the same Wi-Fi network name and accepts the same login, so you get online without doing anything different. (Or you can create a separate network if you prefer.) Powerline adapters come in a pair (you can add more units) and communicate via your home's mains

wiring, piggy-backing a data signal on the 240v circuit. One unit connects to your router with an Ethernet cable; the other plugs in anywhere you like, as long as it's on the same electricity meter. Both types of extender should be simple to set up.

We've tested how fast the devices transfer data in megabytes per second (MB/s) rather than megabits (mbps). They are all 802.11ac devices, supporting 1200Mbps Wi-Fi, but it's the MB/s speed that's more relevant.

POWERLINE £130 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30907

Devolu Magic 1 Wi-Fi

Like Netgear, Devolu calls this a mesh product, by which it means you can add more satellite units and they'll work together. That could make sense, offering the potential benefit of interference-free

powerline communication. A Multiroom Kit, with two units, costs £200 (see www.snipca.com/30908). A single unit gave us 15.4MB/s on the 5GHz band, falling to 7.4MB/s for Wi-Fi devices further away,

and 2.4GHz speeds, at up to 6.9MB/s, beat everything but the pricier Nighthawk X6S.

RATING
★★★★★



POWERLINE £120 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30909

TP-Link WPA9610

This powerline kit is rated similarly to the Magic 1, but didn't match its speeds for us, getting wirelessly connected devices 11.1MB/s, falling to 7MB/s further from the satellite (it shouldn't matter

how far the satellite is from the base unit). The satellite has just a single Ethernet port. The plug-in boxes are awkwardly wide and lack the Magic 1's handy pass-through mains socket, but were simple to set

up. There are lots of features for things like access control and a guest network.

RATING
★★★★★



POWERLINE £35 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30905

Tenda PH5 AV1000

Consisting of a compact primary unit and smaller satellite, this powerline kit creates only a 2.4GHz network for devices to connect to, limiting its speed. In our tests, it managed only 4.5MB/s at best, falling to 3.6MB/s further

away. That should still be enough for HD video streaming, and a PC plugged into the single Ethernet port got 7MB/s. We found setup straightforward, with a few extra options like denying access to certain devices or at

certain times, though no guest network. Omitting 5GHz is unusual in 2019, but it does keep the price down.

RATING
★★★★★



REPEATER £146 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30901

Netgear Nighthawk X6S

This is a tri-band repeater. As well as 2.4GHz, it creates two 5GHz networks: one for devices to connect to, the other a 'backhaul' to your main router. This clears the way for speedier signals, and the X6S also has

stronger radio transmitters. Our tests found it much speedier in practice, giving up to 25.5MB/s, and 14MB/s even in a distant room. It's easy to set up and has a **USB 2.0** port to share a drive as well as four

Ethernet sockets. Pricey, but worth it for fast file transfer or **4K** streaming.

RATING

★★★★★



REPEATER £29 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30903

Tenda A15 AC750

Like the Asus RP-AC55 (below), this tiny, low-cost repeater plugs into a mains socket (to power itself, it's not powerline) and makes extending your Wi-Fi simple. Most products here create networks on both

the original 2.4GHz band and 5GHz; the latter is often less congested and allows higher speeds, but its shorter waves are depleted by distance and obstacles. The A15 AC750 was slightly faster than the

RP-AC55 at long distances on 5GHz, despite its lower rating, but slow on 2.4GHz.

RATING

★★★★★



REPEATER £54 from Scan www.snipca.com/30902

Asus RP-AC55

On the front of the unit, two multi-segment LED indicators show the strength of the connection to your router on the 2.4GHz and 5GHz bands. It's not as comprehensive as the displays on the Netgear

Nighthawk X6S or TP-Link WPA9610, but handy. In our tests, the RP-AC55 was average at its best, managing 7.6MB/s on 5GHz, but this halved at longer distances. This was less than a third of Netgear's

speed. On 2.4GHz it was effective at getting at least some signal through walls.

RATING

★★★★★



WHAT SHOULD I BUY?

We solve your buying dilemmas

What is the best SSD for my Lenovo PC?

Q I read with interest your article on **SSDs** (Issue 545, page 24). I have a Lenovo C440 all-in-one PC. Could you advise on the most suitable drive to upgrade it?

Edd Webb

A The C440 has only one drive bay, so you'd need to replace the 3.5in hard drive with a 2.5in SSD. Choose any compatible 2.5in drive, or specify



the C440 when ordering from a company such as Crucial (www.snipca.com/30911), Mr Memory (www.snipca.com/30912) or Kingston (www.snipca.com/30913).

You'll also need a standard 2.5 to 3.5in bracket. First, install the SSD in an external 2.5/3.5in **USB SATA drive caddy** (under £20; try this: www.snipca.com/30931), then install Windows on it. Next, swap the SSD into the C440 and the hard drive into the caddy, where you can continue to use it.

A simpler option, as long as your C440 has **USB 3.0** (not 2.0) ports, is an external drive.

A basic SSD like the Adata SD700 (£48 for 256GB from Amazon www.snipca.com/30923, pictured) will go as fast as USB 3 can manage, much faster than a hard drive. Install Windows 10 on the new drive, then go to the **BIOS** settings (see www.snipca.com/30924) to make your PC start up from this in future.



Do you need advice on what you should buy? Email us at letters@computeractive.co.uk

Reviews

PHONE | £240 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30972

Motorola Moto G7

Magnificent seven?

As regular readers will know, the arrival of a new Moto G in the *Computeractive* office is something of a nail-biter. Launched by Motorola in 2013, shortly before the brand moved from Google to Lenovo, it was a great budget phone that kept getting better. Then other budget phones appeared, and the mighty G fell behind. Last year it rocketed back up the leaderboard with the G6 (see our review, Issue 530), and here's the successor... costing 20 quid more. Sigh.

That's for the Moto G7. There's also the Moto G7 Plus (£270), which has a better processor and camera; the G7 Power (£180), with lower specs but a bigger battery; or the G7 Play (£150), which also has lower specs and is smaller. Although we weren't able to set aside our entire reviews schedule to test the plethora of G7s, the Play looks a bit of a bargain – plasticky but with no obvious missing features except **NFC** for till payments – while the Plus could easily be worth the extra 30 quid. The glass-backed Power will appeal if you want two-day battery life and aren't as fussed about screen or camera quality.

The G7 is **Gorilla Glass 3** front and back, in white with a silver aluminium frame or all black. It's distinguished by a sharp 6.2in edge-to-edge **IPS** screen with a small notch. While blurred-background portraits are supported by the rear dual camera (pictured below), the absence of a second lens or depth sensor on the front rules out blurring and facial recognition. You might wonder why: there's room at the bottom for a Motorola logo, so if they just turned the whole thing the other way up...

The Snapdragon 632 processor isn't as



fast as the Kirin 970 in the similarly priced Honor Play, but enough to run Android 9 smoothly and play 3D games, perhaps with reduced graphics quality. The battery lasted 11 hours 30 minutes in our video-playback test, better than the G6 but an hour or so less than rivals. That may be partly due to the Full HD-plus screen, which isn't as vivid or contrasty as **AMOLED** displays, but bright. Ignore the advertised 'high res zoom' – there's no optical telephoto here, just enhanced digital zoom – but the rear cameras take pictures as good as you'll get for this kind of money.

SPECIFICATIONS

6.2in 2207x1080-pixel screen • 12-megapixel and 5-megapixel rear cameras • 8-megapixel front camera • 64GB flash storage • MicroSD card slot • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 4.2 • 3G/4G • 157x75x8.0mm (HxWxD) • 172g • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/30975

VERDICT Rivalled by the likes of Honor and its own variants, the Moto G7 isn't an undisputed budget champion, but definitely a contender

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE Honor Play £240 The cameras aren't quite as good, but you get a top-end processor and 13-hour battery life



DO I REALLY NEED...

An artificially intelligent toothbrush?

What does it do?

Cleans your teeth.

Wise guy, huh?

All right, Bluetooth toothbrushes – Bluetoothbrushes, as we've just decided to call them – not only clean your teeth but detect how well they're doing it, reporting back to you through a smartphone app.

Why would I want it?

Although an electric toothbrush's motor does the work of rotating or oscillating the brush head, it's still the responsibility of the user to navigate it around their mouth. A smart brush like the Philips Sonicare FlexCare Platinum Connected (around £130, discounted from £270, pictured) or Oral-B's Genius X (coming this summer) has sensors in the handle that detect where and how hard you're brushing, so the app can warn you where you missed a bit or if you're damaging your gums with excessive elbow grease.



What's the catch?

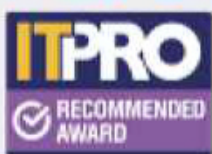
They are neither cheap nor simple. The Sonicare has more buttons than some printers, and to brush with the app you first need to open it on your phone. Oral-B's existing Genius 9000 (around £100) uses your phone camera to monitor brushing, but you have to mount a plastic holder on your bathroom mirror. The Genius X does away with this and uses sensors and a knowledge of brushing styles – the AI part.

So can I do without it?

It may be worth waiting to see what the Genius X has to offer. Monitoring how you brush is a good idea, because dentists say it's often done wrong. But we'd like it to be less hassle, and that the app could talk rather than just show diagrams – more convenient while you're busy brushing your teeth.



AOC



X24P1 24"

Experience
great resolution
in style



buyer.com amazon Insight.

eu.aoc.com

Reviews

SPEAKER | £130 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30982

Ultimate Ears Boom 3

Super sonic

After three years there's a new version of our favourite outdoor portable speaker (see our review, Issue 476), and at the same price. The giant plus and minus volume buttons are now set directly into the fabric cover, rather than on a plastic panel, while the fabric has a finer weave and an iridescent colour shift.

The **microUSB** port has sensibly been moved from the base to the rear, so you can charge the Boom 3 while upright. Alternatively, just pop it on the optional Power Up dock (£35 extra). As before, the battery will last up to 15 hours. We're not so keen on the replacement of the tripod mount, plus screw-in metal D-ring, with

SPECIFICATIONS

2x 45mm drivers • Bluetooth (requires computer, phone or tablet supporting Bluetooth A2DP) • 184x73x73mm (HxWxD) • 0.6kg • Two-year warranty www.snipca.com/30984

a webbing loop at the top, which is a much less versatile attachment point. The 3.5mm aux input has also gone, so this is a wireless-only speaker. Its quoted range has increased from 30 metres to 45, although walls greatly reduce this.

As before, the **IP67**-rated Boom 3 can survive under a metre of water, but it's less likely to need to, because it now floats. Sound quality from the two two-inch **speaker drivers** is the same, with a rich mid-range – flattering most music and speech, albeit with some missing detail – and good punch, even if bass can't match the bigger Megaboom 3 (£149 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30983). Two units can be paired for stereo, and a new Magic button accesses up to four Apple Music or Deezer playlists, with more services due to be supported.



VERDICT It's even prettier and still sounds great, but the added features are offset by those that have disappeared

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE UE Boom 2 **£69**

Shop around and you can find great deals on the old version, which sounds as good as ever



PRINTER | £146 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30976

Canon Pixma TS8250

Don't get the blues

Canon's Pixma TS6150 (see our review, Issue 533) is an excellent all-round inkjet printer/scanner/copier, using four dye-based inks for photos and graphics plus a separate pigment-based black for crisp text. At the time of writing, it's available at Argos discounted from £110 to £68 (see www.snipca.com/30980), which is quite a bargain.

At twice that price, the TS8250 needs to justify its existence. Similarly sized, but with a more sharp-edged design that incorporates an **SD card** slot at the bottom left, it adds a sixth ink (blue) for more vivid colour. As well as dual paper

SPECIFICATIONS

4800x1200dpi maximum print resolution • 1200x2400dpi maximum scan resolution • 100-sheet paper tray • 100-sheet rear feed • Multi-purpose input tray • USB 2.0 • 802.11n Wi-Fi • 140x373x319mm (HxWxD) • 6.6kg • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/30978

inputs, there's a multi-purpose tray to print CD, DVD or Blu-ray discs and printable nail stickers (see www.snipca.com/30979), neither of which are supported by the cheaper model.

Scanning was a bit faster, and captured detail faithfully even in the darkest and lightest areas, but Canon's software gave us no option to make use of the higher quoted maximum resolution of 2400x4800**dpi**. Printing was no quicker, and although photos looked good both in colour and black and white, we saw some subtle banding in dark areas, an unexpected flaw for a multi-ink system.

The six inks are replaced separately to avoid waste, but at about 9p per colour page using Canon's XXL cartridges, running costs are fairly high, although plain-black-text pages work out at a reasonable 2.7p. Duplex (both sides)



printing can be done automatically, but slowly, and there's full support for Wi-Fi and cloud printing, but these are also features of the cheaper TS6150.

VERDICT Unless you have a specific need for any of the extra features, the TS8250 isn't worth the asking price

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE Canon Pixma TS6150

£68 At this price it's irresistible, but even at around £100 it's a better value all-round printer



E-READER | £240 from Kobo www.snipca.com/30988

Kobo Forma

A good read

After comprehensive testing, we can report that if you try hard, you can eventually stop calling this the Fobo Korma. Kobo deserves some respect for being the last significant rival to Amazon in the market for e-readers, no doubt helped by the fact its parent company, Rakuten, is an online shopping giant in its own right.

The Forma looks strikingly similar to the top-end Kindle Oasis (£230 from www.snipca.com/26084, see our review, Issue 515), with narrow borders on three sides of its **IPX8** waterproof black plastic case and a wider area on the fourth, so you can hold it without covering up any text. It has an 8in screen compared with the Oasis' 7in, though, and the rubbery finish, rounded shape and angled grip panel feel better in use.

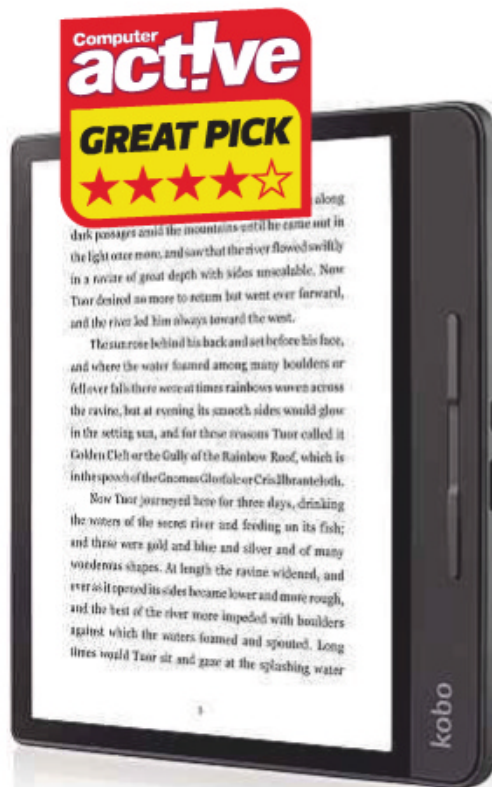
“Not cheap, but has a bigger screen than its Amazon rival and is comfortable to use”

Like Kindles, the Forma uses an **E Ink** display that looks like printed paper rather than a glowing screen. But it *can* light up for night-time reading, and Kobo's ComfortLight feature, which gradually adjusts from bluish to yellowish in the evening, is a health benefit Amazon doesn't match. And there are lots of ways to adjust the fonts according to your eyesight and taste, which could make reading more enjoyable.

Inevitably, these options don't work with PDF files, which have fixed formatting. But it's good that Kobo's software supports lots of formats. To read some of these on a Kindle, you'd first have to

SPECIFICATIONS

8in E Ink touchscreen • 8GB memory (32GB £290) • 802.11n Wi-Fi • Reads EPUB, EPUB3, PDF, MOBI, JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP, TIFF, TXT, HTML, RTF, CBZ, CBR • 178x160x8.5mm (HxWxD) • 197g • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/30988



email files to Amazon for conversion. You can also read web pages saved from your PC using the Pocket offline reader app, which are automatically synced – although we found this slow and didn't always work properly.

Kobo's online store isn't far behind Amazon's in its choice of published books, but many are pricier and it's harder to restrict searches to free books. With a library card, you can borrow books free of charge using the OverDrive service. You can browse and buy on the device itself, but again it's slow on Wi-Fi, and there's no **3G/4G**. Unlike Kindles, the Forma can't handle audiobooks.

You'd have to *really* want the big screen and ComfortLight to spend an extra £100-odd over Kobo's Aura H2O (£150 from www.snipca.com/24473, see Issue 503) or the Kindle Paperwhite (£120 from www.snipca.com/29818, see Issue 543).

VERDICT This is a very good e-reader with not a lot of competition, but for the money we wish it was even better

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE

Amazon Kindle Paperwhite **£120** With backlighting and waterproofing, this leaves little for pricier models to add



GADGET GRAVEYARD

Devices that never caught on

Apple Newton MessagePad



What was it?

Launched in 1993, Apple's Newton MessagePad (pictured) was the first 'personal digital assistant', a hand-held computer designed for organisational and communication tasks. The paperback-sized device had a black-and-white screen on which users entered text by writing with a stylus.



Why did it die?

Too small to replace a laptop, too big for most pockets, the Newton embodied exciting ideas but little practicality. Handwriting recognition initially worked badly and even after major improvements it didn't catch on in the way tiny phone keyboards later would. Wireless communication was limited to another MessagePad less than a metre away. After five years and several models, the MessagePad was discontinued. But it helped to pave the way for touchscreen tablets and smartphones, not least by using chips from British manufacturer ARM, whose technology is still the basis of today's iPads and iPhones.

NEXT ISSUE

On Sale **Weds 10 April**

Dell XPS 13 (2019)

Thin, light and powerful, from £899



Amazon Fire TV Stick 4K Ultra HD High-res streaming with Alexa for £50

These and much more...

Subscribe to Computeractive at www.getcomputeractive.co.uk

Our pick of products that have won the **Buy It** award

LAPTOP

HP Envy 13

£750 from www.snipca.com/29555

Tested Issue 539



The combination of an eighth-generation quad-core i5 chip and MX 150 graphics makes this an excellent all-round laptop, let down only by the poor colour reproduction of its Full HD touchscreen. Seven-hour battery life is adequate, and it's nicely made.

ALTERNATIVE Dell XPS 13

This premium laptop starts at £1,200, but the best deal is with the brand new quad-core i7-8550 and QHD touchscreen. £1,300 from www.snipca.com/26796

DESKTOP PC

Mesh Ryzen Gaming PC CS

£650 from www.snipca.com/27705

Tested Issue 528



With a six-core Ryzen 5 1600 processor and 4GB GeForce GTX 1050 Ti graphics card, this is a brilliant all-round desktop PC for the money, completed by 8GB of memory, 120GB SSD and 1TB hard drive.

ALTERNATIVE Lenovo IdeaCentre 620s

A laptop i5 CPU plus GTX 1050 Ti make this discounted compact PC a sleek silver bargain. £530 from www.snipca.com/29205

APPLE IPAD

Apple iPad 9.7in (2018)

£319 from www.snipca.com/27670

Tested Issue 527



Now with a faster processor and supporting Apple's Pencil stylus (£89), this is a brilliant full-size tablet at an unbeatable price. Has 32GB and no microSD slot, so also consider the 128GB version at a still reasonable £409.

ALTERNATIVE iPad Mini 4

At much the same price for 128GB (the only version), the smaller and slower Mini lacks Pencil support. £399 from www.snipca.com/27671

ANDROID TABLET

Samsung Galaxy Tab S3 9.7

£428 from www.snipca.com/30707

Tested Issue 501



Now discounted and with a stylus included, this full-size HDR tablet is a better deal than the new Tab S4 (see Issue 540). Apple's faster £319 iPad with optional £89 Pencil is superior, but lacks microSD expansion.

ALTERNATIVE Amazon Fire HD 8

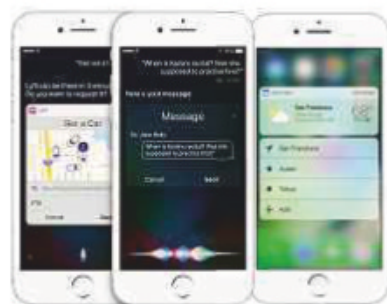
Fewer apps work with Fire tablets, but you get the essentials plus hands-free Alexa. £80 (16GB) or £100 (32GB) from www.snipca.com/29340

APPLE IPHONE

Apple iPhone 7

£449 from www.snipca.com/29359

Tested Issue 486



Two years old but great value at this price, held back only by the mean 32GB of storage, which can't be expanded. An extra £100 gets a huge 128GB. If you want a dual camera, the 8 Plus is a better buy at £699 with 64GB (www.snipca.com/29358), but the XR is superior overall.

ALTERNATIVE iPhone XR

Lacking only the dual camera, this is a fantastic phone that's much more affordable than the £999 XS. £749 from www.snipca.com/29361

ANDROID PHONE

Motorola Moto G6

£220 from www.snipca.com/27965

Tested Issue 530



The Moto G line returns to form with this distinctive Gorilla Glass-backed 5.7in phone. Screen quality and processing power may not be top end, but the dual camera is excellent and it feels like a lot of phone for the money.

ALTERNATIVE OnePlus 6T

A high-end phone with incredible battery life and innovative in-screen fingerprint reader at a sensible price. £499 from www.snipca.com/29844

SET YOUR **DESKTOP FREE**

GET THE SPACE YOU NEED WITH IIYAMA'S SMART DESKTOP SOLUTIONS.



ProLite **XUB2492HSU-B1** + DS3001C



ProLite **B2791QSU-B1** + DS1001C



2x ProLite **XUB2792QSU-B1** + DS3002C



2x ProLite **XUB2495WSU-B1** + DS1002C



iiyama

Find your match on www.iiyama.com

Buy It

Our pick of products that have won the **Buy It** award

EBOOK READER

Amazon Kindle (2016)
£60 from www.snipca.com/21901
Tested Issue 483



Amazon's basic ebook reader is now good enough to be our first choice. It's plasticky, but slim and lightweight, with a decent 4GB storage and good battery life. Consider the £110 Paperwhite if you want backlighting and 3G.

ALTERNATIVE Kobo Aura H2O (2017)
This premium waterproof reader from Amazon's main rival can't load Kindle books, but it's very pleasant to use. £150 from www.snipca.com/24473

SECURITY SOFTWARE

Kaspersky Internet Security 2019
£17.99 from www.snipca.com/21532
Tested Issue 516



Kaspersky Internet Security has won our past nine antivirus tests and the 2019 version is now available at an exclusive reader discount on our Software Store. Go to the link above for a one-year, one-device licence or buy a two-year, three-device licence for just £34.99.

ALTERNATIVE Norton Security Deluxe
Almost as good as Kaspersky, but blocks more legitimate software. £18.99 from www.snipca.com/25004

PHOTO EDITING

Serif Affinity Photo
£49 from www.snipca.com/23739
Tested Issue 498



Designed for both full-time professional image retouchers and the rest of us keen amateurs, this is a beautifully designed and comprehensive program for both Windows and Mac users, although so far it performs better on Macs.

ALTERNATIVE Xara Photo & Graphic Designer For all-round design and drawing plus photo filters, this affordable app has a lot to offer. £50 from www.snipca.com/26514

PC MONITOR

AOC Q2778VQE
£200 from www.snipca.com/25508
Tested Issue 468



It comes with no extras, such as built-in speakers or a USB hub, but this 2560x1440 panel gives you a full 27in screen with excellent contrast and colour accuracy at a very reasonable price. It's a little laggy for gamers, but there's no ghosting on motion.

ALTERNATIVE Philips Brilliance 241B7QPIKEB With a great picture, stylish design, speakers and webcam, this 24in Full HD IPS is an excellent smaller screen. £185 from www.snipca.com/26850

ROUTER

D-Link DIR-882 Exo AC2600
£68 from www.snipca.com/30708
Tested Issue 534



There are faster routers with more features, but this simple, compact unit covers the basics (without an ADSL modem) at a bargain price. USB 2.0 and 3.0 ports let you share drives, and media streamers are supported.

ALTERNATIVE Synology RT2600ac Comprehensive sharing features (including USB 2.0 and 3.0 and SD card), controls and plenty of add-on apps complement excellent long-range performance. £217 from www.snipca.com/30710

PRINTER

Canon Pixma TS6150
£104 from www.snipca.com/28430
Tested Issue 533



Modest speeds, no ADF and higher than average running costs are among its flaws, but crisp scans and excellent print quality on all types of documents – photos, plain text and solid-colour graphics – make this a great choice as a do-it-all home printer at a fair price.

ALTERNATIVE HP OfficeJet Pro 6960 Decent speeds, plenty of features (including automatic document feed) and reasonable running costs make this a solid buy. £87 from www.snipca.com/28483

PRICE DROP

COMPETITION

Win 1 of 3 Lioncast LX60 headsets

Lioncast's exceptional new LX60 headset adapts flexibly to any head shape, helped by the Ultra Comfort headband, which guarantees the best wearing comfort in every situation.

The flexible Ear Cup and Memory Foam suspensions also provide ultra-comfortable support whatever you use the headphones for – and no

matter how long you wear them. Lights tell you whether your microphone is active or muted.

Two 60mm neodymium drivers and a built-in USB sound card guarantee a powerful, sophisticated sound across multiple devices (PC, PS4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch, Mac, laptops, tablets and smartphones). It's perfect for gamers who want to immerse themselves in the experience, or for audiophiles who want the best sound possible.

To enter this competition, email your address to cacomp@dennis.co.uk with 'LX60' in the subject line by midnight Tuesday 9 April. Good luck!



You can buy **Lioncast's LX60** headset from Amazon for £89.95 (www.snipca.com/30874). You'll find more Lioncast products, including gaming mice, mousepads and keyboards, at www.lioncast.com/en. For more information follow [@LioncastDE](https://twitter.com/LioncastDE) on Twitter, and 'like' www.facebook.com/lioncast



LIONCAST

MESH ROUTER

BT Whole Home Wi-Fi
£183 from www.snipca.com/26990
Tested Issue 496



BT's set of three discs, managed from an Apple or Android app, connects to your broadband and spreads high-speed Wi-Fi all around the house. Reception is far better than a single router, and the price is lower than any rival.

ALTERNATIVE Google Wifi

It's technically less powerful, and two dishes cost more than BT's three, but this system works well and has a great app. £229 from www.snipca.com/26989

SOLID-STATE DRIVE

WD Black NVMe 500GB (2018)
£107 from www.snipca.com/30559
Tested issue 545



Although the Corsair Force MP510 is even faster in its pricier 1TB version, WD's Black NVMe drive for the M.2 interface is a great choice across all capacities. A new edition, just released, is more expensive at the moment.

ALTERNATIVE Crucial BX500

For the traditional SATA interface, this budget 2.5in drive is surprisingly fast, though not rated for the longest life. £35 for 240GB from www.snipca.com/30538

WEB DESIGN

Xara Web Designer Premium
£70 from www.snipca.com/29294
Tested Issue 453



This visual program makes creating sites more like laying out a document than writing HTML code, and sites can be responsive, meaning they look good on big and small screens. A cheaper, basic version is also available for £35.

ALTERNATIVE Incomedia WebSite X5 v13 Evolution It may feel basic, but this program outputs efficient HTML code and responsive pages. £60 from www.snipca.com/19440

Computer
active

ON SALE NOW!

Computeractive 2018 Back Issue CD



Buy it now from Amazon at
www.snipca.com/30307

or search for 'computeractive cd' on Amazon

You can still buy our 2017 CD at www.snipca.com/26848

Workshops & Tips

14 pages of easy-to-follow workshops and expert tips

35 Stream web radio throughout your home

38 Update PC drivers for the Windows 10 update

40 Sync bookmarks across Chrome, Firefox and Edge

42 Readers' Tips

PLUS

44 Phone & Tablet Tips

46 Make Windows Better

47 Make Office Better

48 In the Club: Set up a payment system

HOW TO...

Stream web radio throughout your home

by Nik Rawlinson

What you need: Fast broadband and, optionally, the Radioplayer app, TuneIn or a Wi-Fi radio

Time required: 30 minutes

Nobody knows how many radio stations there are in the world. Even the CIA World Factbook (www.snipca.com/30885) has stopped counting, perhaps because the number is changing all the time – or because it's increasingly difficult to decide what a radio station is.

If your own definition of radio only includes broadcasters on AM, FM or DAB, you're missing out. There are stations for

every taste and interest – if you're prepared to venture online.

Here, we'll show you how you can listen to British and international broadcasters anywhere in your home, using nothing more than broadband and Wi-Fi. The process varies, depending on the hardware you have to hand, but if you're sitting at your PC, all you really need is a browser. As the simplest option, that's where we'll start.



1 Stream radio through your browser and apps

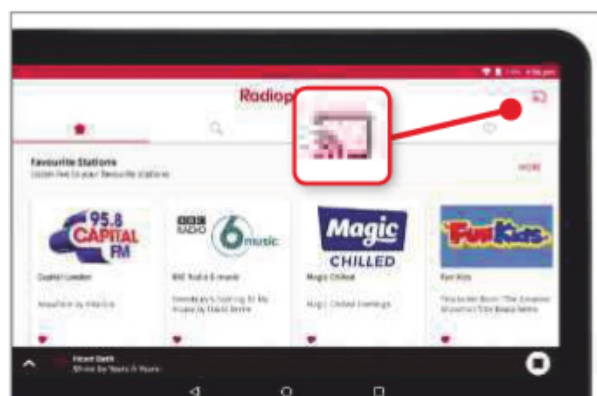
Almost every UK radio station broadcasts on the web, but bookmarking each of their homepages and navigating their various layouts is a chore. Fortunately, the BBC teamed up with the UK's commercial broadcasters to develop Radioplayer (www.radioplayer.co.uk), which makes it easy to listen to more than 400 local and national stations.

Either click A-Z at the top of the homepage for a complete list of stations, or use the search box to find a specific broadcaster. When you click what you want to listen to, the stream opens in a pop-out window.

As long as you leave this open, you can either close your main browser window

or use it to visit another site.

Radioplayer lets you save favourites, and you can download companion apps for iOS (www.snipca.com/30741), Android (www.snipca.com/30742) and Amazon Kindle Fire (www.snipca.com/30743).



Tap the 'cast' icon and Radioplayer will broadcast to your TV via Chromecast

If you're using Radioplayer on your phone, you can 'cast' its output to a Google Chromecast by selecting the station you want to hear and tapping the cast icon at the top right of the screen (see screenshot left).

If it doesn't appear, check both that your Chromecast has power and that the TV to which it's connected is switched on. It may not show up on your network if it detects that the device to which its **HDMI** cable is plugged in is sleeping or off.

What Radioplayer lacks is a way to synchronise your favourites between the phone apps and the web service, plus access to any international broadcasters other than the BBC World Service and British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS).

TuneIn plugs these gaps – and more. It has apps for iOS (www.snipca.com/30744), Android (www.snipca.com/30745) and even Windows (www.snipca.com/30746), as well as its own browser-based player (<https://tunein.com>). These give free access to 120,000 stations from around the world.

Better yet, any favourites you save on one platform are synchronised to the others, including the website, so you can pick up where you left off as you move from phone/tablet to computer and back again.

If you're only interested in BBC radio, TuneIn might be more than you need, so instead check out BBC Sounds, the new radio equivalent of iPlayer.

It's online at www.bbc.co.uk/sounds, and available as apps for iOS (www.snipca.com/30749) and Android (www.snipca.com/30750).

As well as output from each of the BBC's national and local radio stations, BBC Sounds carries some podcasts, a few of which aren't available through conventional podcast directories or third-party apps.

2

Stream radio using a smart speaker

Amazon Echo and Google Home devices can stream radio. You can launch Radioplayer on Echo using its 'skill' (Amazon's rather naff term for performing software and hardware tasks on the Echo). Say, "Alexa, open Radioplayer", and it will use your location to identify local stations. If you haven't set your location, open the Alexa app on your smartphone and tap Devices followed by 'Echo & Alexa'. Tap the name of the Echo speaker you want to listen

How I use online radio stations

I love learning new languages, so I listen to internet radio as a way of helping my comprehension. I find the foreign-language talk radio stations far easier to follow than foreign-language podcasts because they tend to have higher production values and usually fewer participants talking over one another.



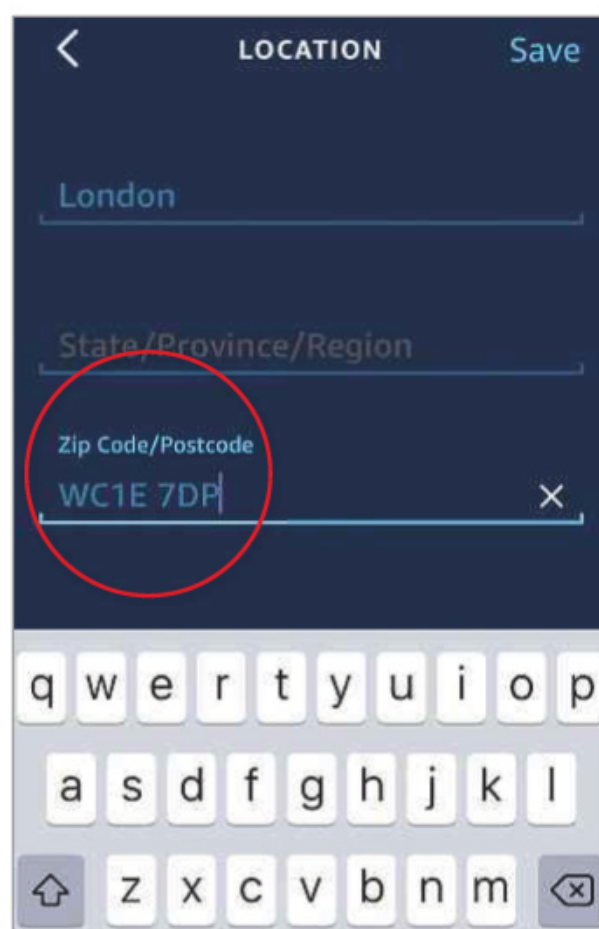
Nik Rawlinson



Do you listen to online radio stations? If so, please recommend one you think your fellow readers would enjoy. Please let us know: letters@computeractive.co.uk

through, then tap Location and enter at least your postcode, if not your complete address (see screenshot below).

Rather neatly, if you're using the



Tell Alexa where you live and it will tune in to your nearest stations

Radioplayer skill on an Echo device, asking "Alexa, what's playing" will give you more information about the current track, artist or programme, just as it does when you're listening to music from your library.

If you'd prefer not to enable the Radioplayer skill, you can instead ask Alexa to play a radio station by name and it will pick the most appropriate app to access it.

The BBC has its own skill for Alexa, which launches in a similar manner ("Alexa, open the BBC"), while for the dedicated Heart and Virgin skills it's "Alexa, play Heart" and "Alexa, play Virgin Radio".

On Google Home devices, use station names to go to your local broadcaster when tuning in to national and regional groups like Heart and Capital. So, in these instances say, "OK Google, play Capital FM", or "OK Google, play Heart Radio".

You can control the volume on either the Echo or Google Home by using the wake command followed by "turn it up" or "turn it down", and shut them up by following the wake command with "stop".

WORKSHOP: Set up a Wi-Fi radio

A dedicated Wi-Fi radio provides by far the most convenient means of listening to internet radio streams. Once set up, you can switch it on and flick between stored favourites, just as you would with domestic broadcasters on your car radio.

We're going to walk through the process of setting up the Elan IR3 (£85 from Amazon www.snipca.com/30765, pictured), a recent Wi-Fi radio from British manufacturer Pure. As well as receiving internet radio stations, the IR3 lets you stream from Spotify and

play tracks stored on a media server, if you've set one up on your home network. Its colour screen makes it easy to choose and save favourite stations. It's popular with shoppers, 68 per cent of whom awarded it five stars on Amazon.

The commands we outline will vary depending on the Wi-Fi radio you use, but the principles should remain the same. If you have any problems, please email Reader Support (see page 71).



The Elan IR3 internet radio has been a hit with consumers

WORKSHOP: Set up a Wi-Fi radio

1 Plug in the radio and switch it on. Make sure it's within reach of your wireless network, then follow the instructions to get it online. Select either the 12- or 24-hour clock, then choose the option to auto-update the radio's **firmware** from the network. Set the timezone **1** and daylight-saving options, pick the option to keep wireless connected, then select your Wi-Fi from the list of networks it's detected.



2 Use the Select button to enter your Wi-Fi password. This is fiddly, as you need to turn the button until you get to the digit or letter you want, then press it to select. When you've entered the password, keep turning until you get to OK, press it again, and wait for the radio to connect to your network (ours is 'Ovingo', below **1**). Once you leave the instructions, you'll find yourself at the source menu.



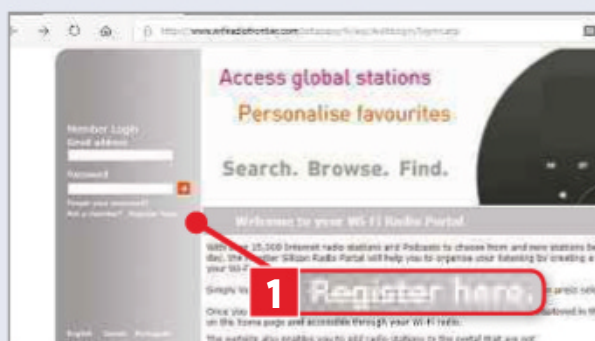
3 'Internet radio' will be pre-selected. Press Select to confirm, then scroll to 'Station list' and press again. You can now choose from favourites, BBC, local UK stations, 'Stations' and podcasts. Pick Stations, scroll to 'Search stations' **1** and press Select. To enter one you want, use the same process as for your password, followed by OK. Scroll through the results to the one you're after then press Select.



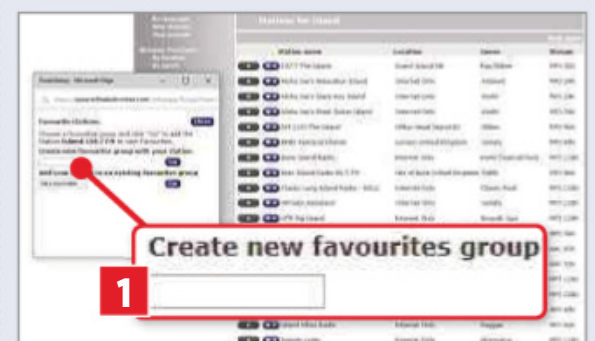
4 The Elan IR3 has 12 presets. You can access three of them by pressing the buttons '1' to '3' **1** below the screen, and the other nine by pressing the button marked '4+' **2**. To save a preset to positions 1, 2 or 3, simply hold down that button. To save a preset to positions 4 and above, hold '4+' until 'Save to Preset' appears (after around two seconds), then scroll down to the position you want and press Select.



5 If you want to listen to your favourites both at home and away, press Menu and, by turning and pressing the Select wheel, work through the menus picking 'Station list', Help, and 'Get access code'. Visit www.wifiradiofrontier.com, click 'Register here' **1**, then enter the code from the Elan IR3 in the box on the following page. Also provide your email address and model of radio.



6 Use the site's search box to find the stations you want to store, or click one of the links under Browse Stations to see lists of every available station, organised by country, genre or language. When you find a station you want to come back to, click the heart icon beside its name. The first time you do this, you'll need to create a group in which to store it, so enter a group name and click Go **1**.



7 Favourites you save via the browser are synced to the radio. Press Menu on the Elan IR3 and select 'Station list'. Select My Favourites from the second-level menu **1**, then the group you created in the browser. These favourites are in addition to any you save using radio preset buttons. Favourites stored on the presets aren't synced to the website, so save them there again if needed.

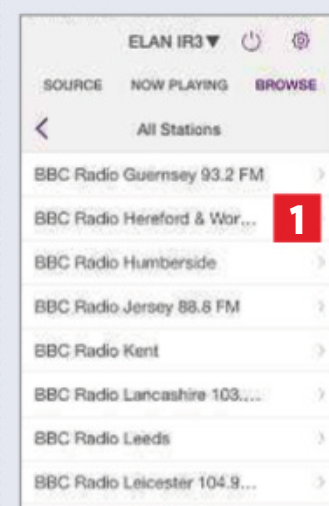


8 Download the Pure Select app on iOS (www.snipca.com/30767) or Android (www.snipca.com/30768) and launch it on your smartphone. If your phone is on the same network as the radio, the app will automatically detect your Elan IR3 and give you full control over the selected station and its volume.



Tap the cog **1** to open settings and you'll also find an Equaliser with which you can tweak the tone of the audio.

9 Even if you don't envisage controlling your radio remotely, it's well worth installing Pure Select simply because it makes the Elan easier to use. It includes the same station directory **1**, giving access to more than 25,000 broadcasters, only here you can scroll through it with a flick of the finger, thus bypassing the Elan's slightly fiddly Select controller.



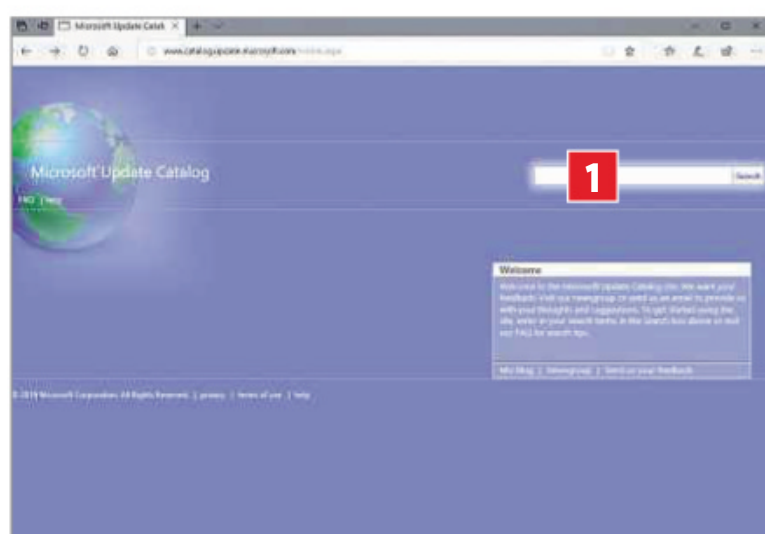
Workshop1

Update your PC's drivers so they work with the new version of Windows 10

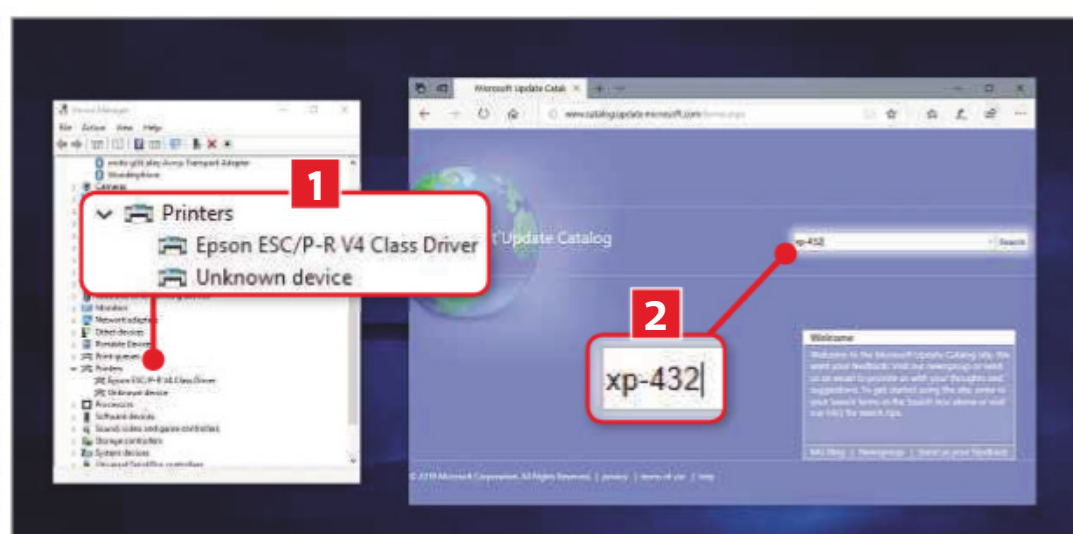
What you need: Windows 10 **Time required:** An hour

Windows 10's next big update lands in April, with improved search, bug fixes and more. Fully patching your PC now reduces potential problems installing it, so follow the steps below to update your **drivers**. By default, Windows 10 only installs drivers with a **digital signature**. If this is a

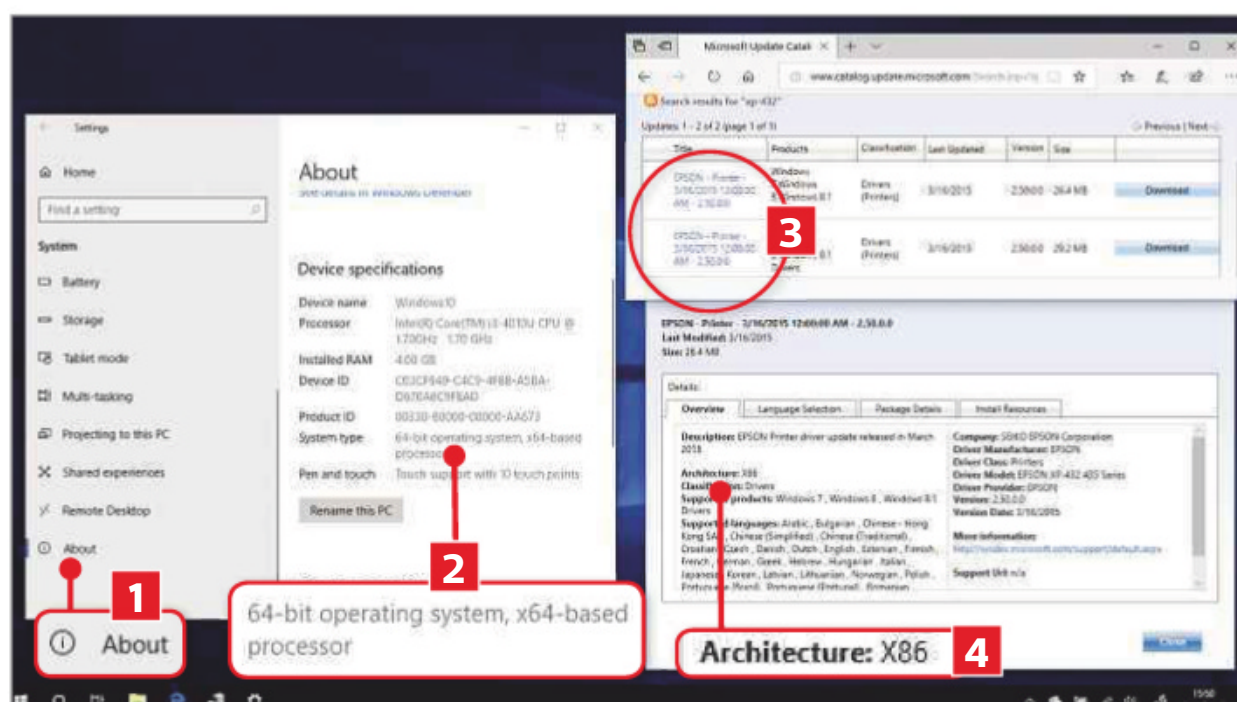
problem, try disabling this feature (see www.snipca.com/30854). Make a **system restore point** first to avoid any mishaps by pressing the Windows key and typing **system restore**. Pick the top result and click 'System Restore...' in the System Properties window.



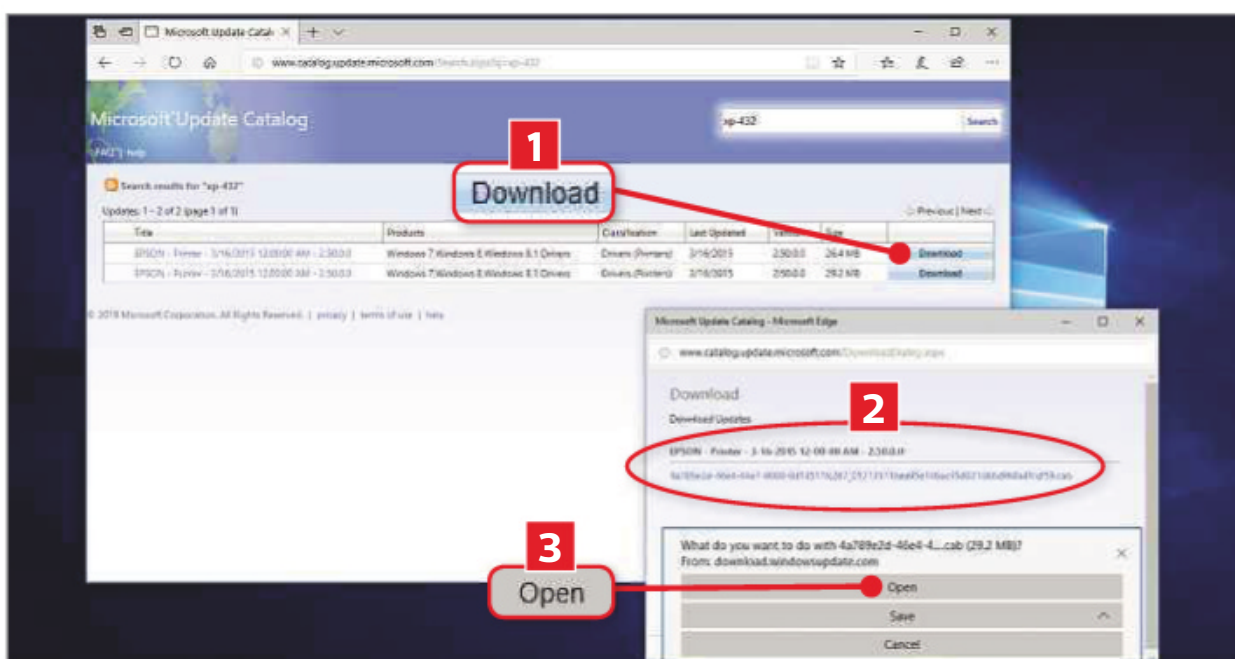
STEP 1 As a home user, you might not have come across Microsoft Update Catalog before. It's a download service for network administrators, which allows them to retrieve updates for the machines they look after. They can roll them out across their organisations, without each PC manually downloading the update direct. Don't let its business focus put you off, though: it's equally useful for home users. Get started by opening a new browser window and pointing it at www.snipca.com/30846. We'll use the search box **1** to find the driver updates we need.



STEP 2 Press the Windows key and type **Device Manager**. Select its entry from the list of results (it should be the only one), then work your way through the various hardware types, by clicking the arrow beside each one **1** to reveal its contents. As you can see from the picture above, our results include 'Epson ESC/P-R V4 Class Driver' because, while tweaking the configuration of our PC, we've lost the driver for our Epson XP-432 printer. Switch back to your browser and use the model number of any unfound or mis-installed device as a search term in the Update Catalog **2** ('XP-432' in our case).

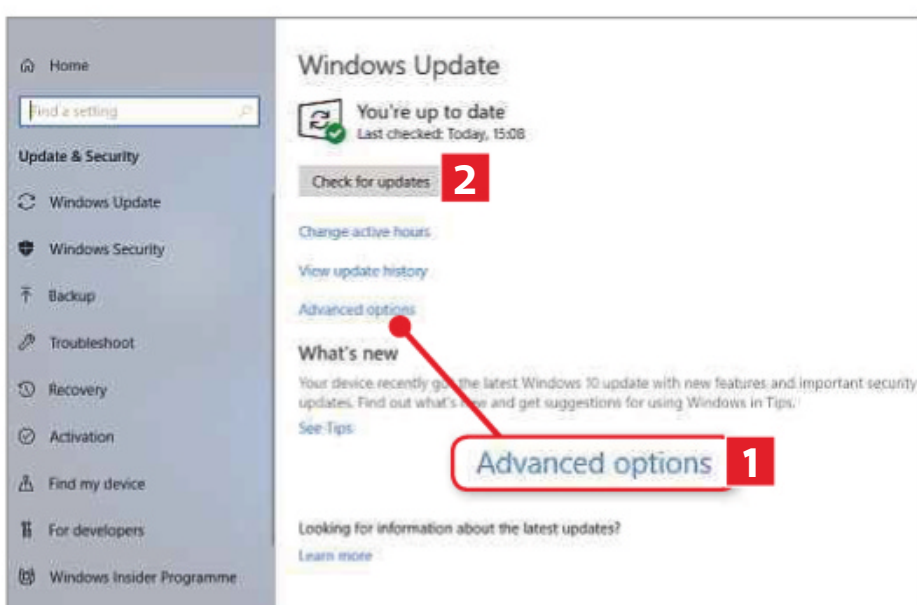
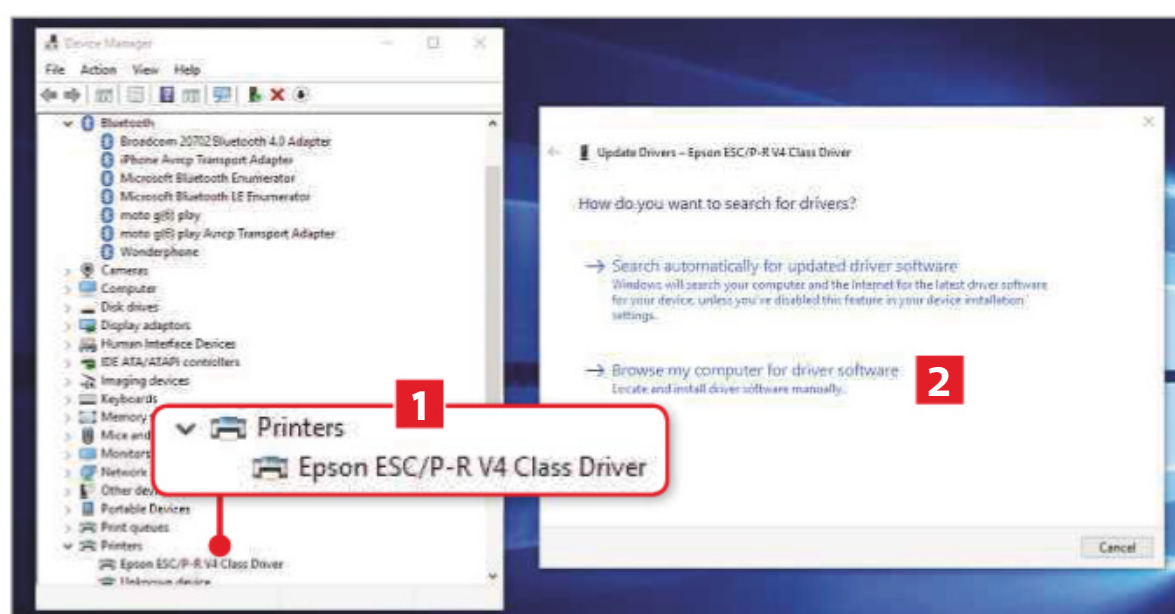


STEP 3 If your search turns up two seemingly identical results, as ours has, it's usually because they are tailored to the **32bit** and **64bit** editions of Windows. It's important to download the appropriate one, so open Settings by clicking the cog on the Windows menu, then click System followed by About **1**. Check in the main pane for 'System type', which in this grab shows our PC to be running the 64bit version of Windows **2**. Now click each of the links in Update Catalog **3** and check the Architecture line in the panels that pop up. One will say X86, and one AMD64 **4**.

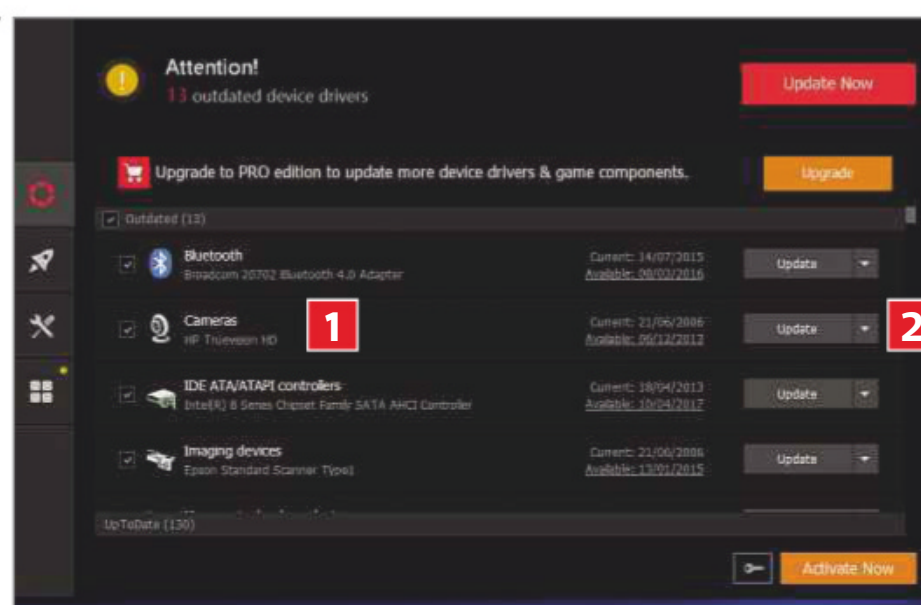


STEP 4 Click Download **1** on the line containing the version of the driver that's been tailored to your system, followed by the link on the box that pops up **2**. In our case, we need to download the driver referenced by the second link. When asked whether to Open or Save the download, click Open **3**. The download comes in the form of a **cabinet file**, as you can tell from the .cab extension. When it completes, click Open to view its contents, then create a new folder on your desktop and drag the full contents of the download into it to extract them.

STEP 5 Once the files have copied across, close the window showing the downloaded files. Now right-click on the device whose driver you want to update **1** and pick 'Update driver'. Windows will ask if you'd like to automatically search for a driver or use one you've downloaded. Click 'Browse my computer for driver software' **2** and, on the following box, click 'Browse...'. Navigate to the folder containing your extracted files and click Next. Windows will install the driver, and its name should be corrected in Device Manager.



STEP 6 Repeat the process as many times as necessary to make sure all of your devices are properly installed and running up-to-date drivers before upgrading to the new Windows 10. In the meantime, open Settings, pick 'Update & Security', and click 'Advanced options' **1**. Click the switch below 'Automatically download updates, even over metered data connections' so that it moves to 'On' and your system should be automatically patched going forward. Click the back arrow to return to the previous screen, and click 'Check for updates' **2** to make sure every other part of Windows is running as well as your peripherals.



STEP 7 Third-party tools can help you keep an eye on which of your drivers need updating. Download and install the free Driver Booster (www.snipca.com/30853) and, when it first launches, it will scan your PC for outdated drivers. As you can see from the screenshot, it has found a number of drivers that Windows Update hasn't brought entirely up to date **1**, which looked fine in Device Manager. Click the Update button **2** beside any device whose driver you want to patch and Driver Booster will first create a System Restore point, then download and apply the update automatically.

Workshop 2

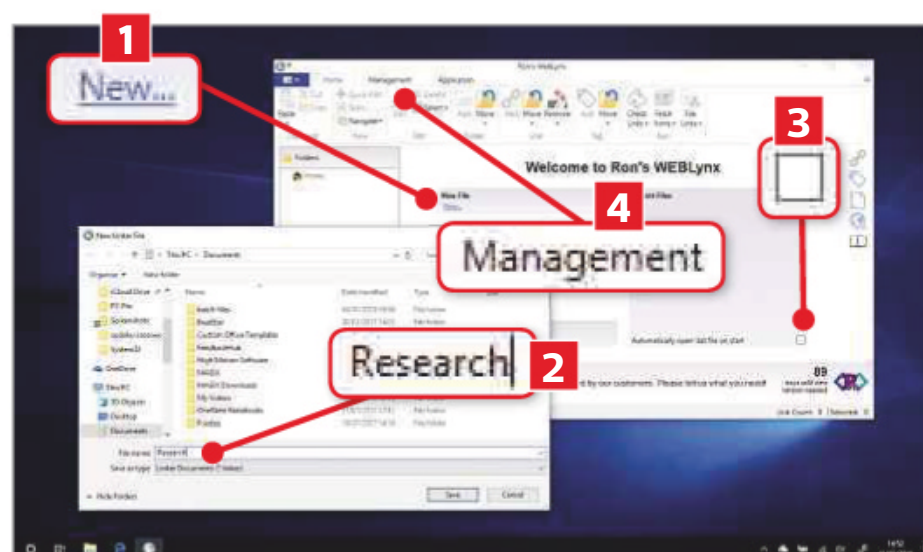
Synchronise bookmarks across Chrome, Firefox and Edge

What you need: Ron's WebLynx

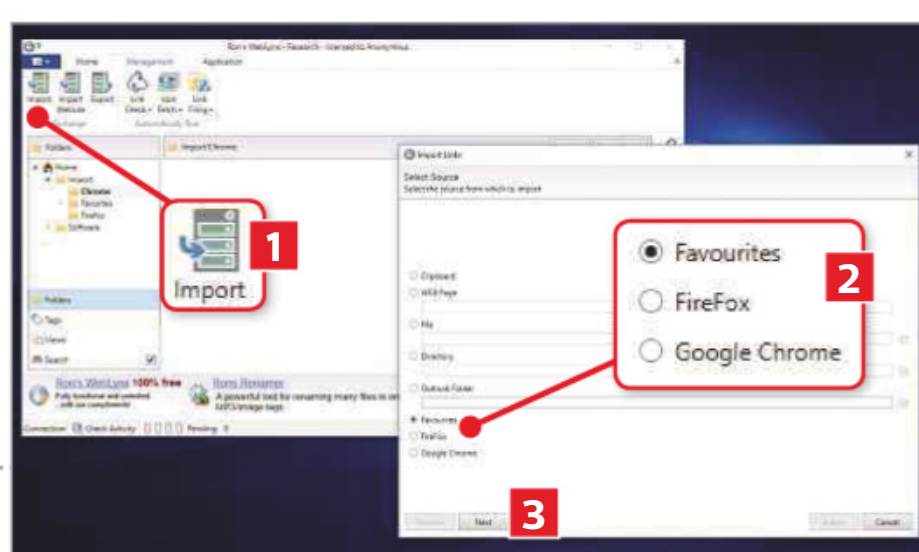
Time required: 20 minutes

Chrome and Firefox both let you synchronise your bookmarks across multiple PCs – as long as you're using the same browser on each machine and you're logged into a Google or Mozilla account. But what if you have different browsers installed

in different locations, or you switch between different browsers because some websites work better in one than another? In that case, bookmark organiser Ron's WebLynx can help by managing your bookmarks outside of the browser itself.

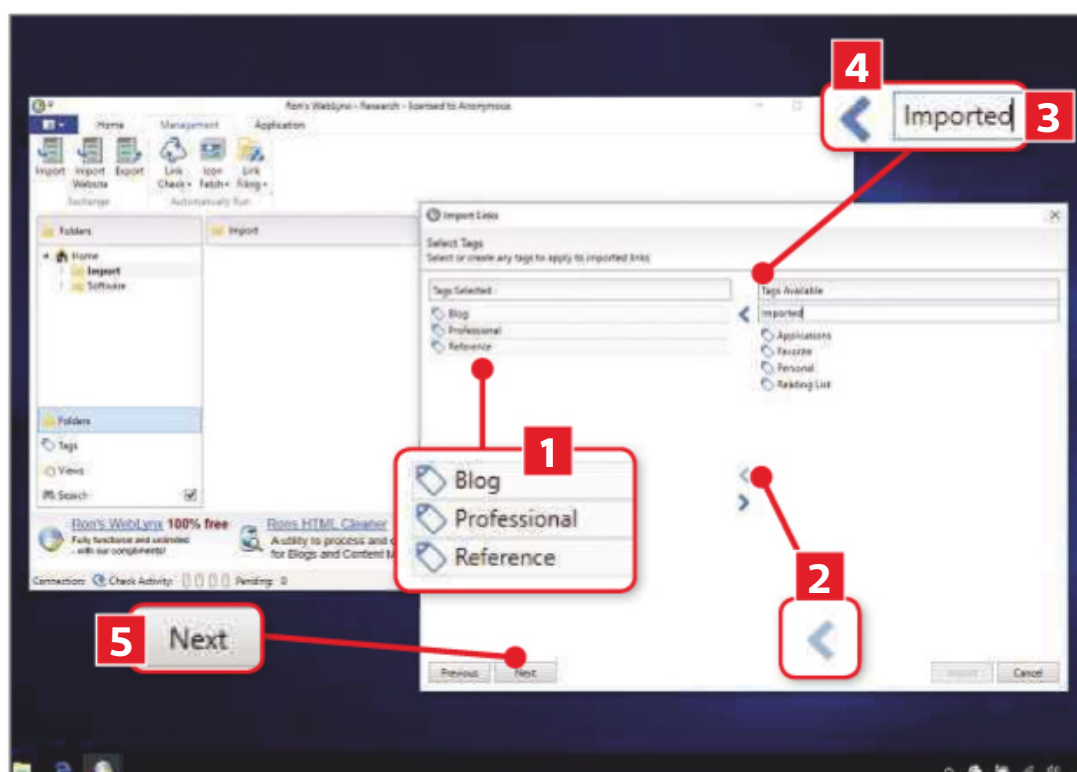


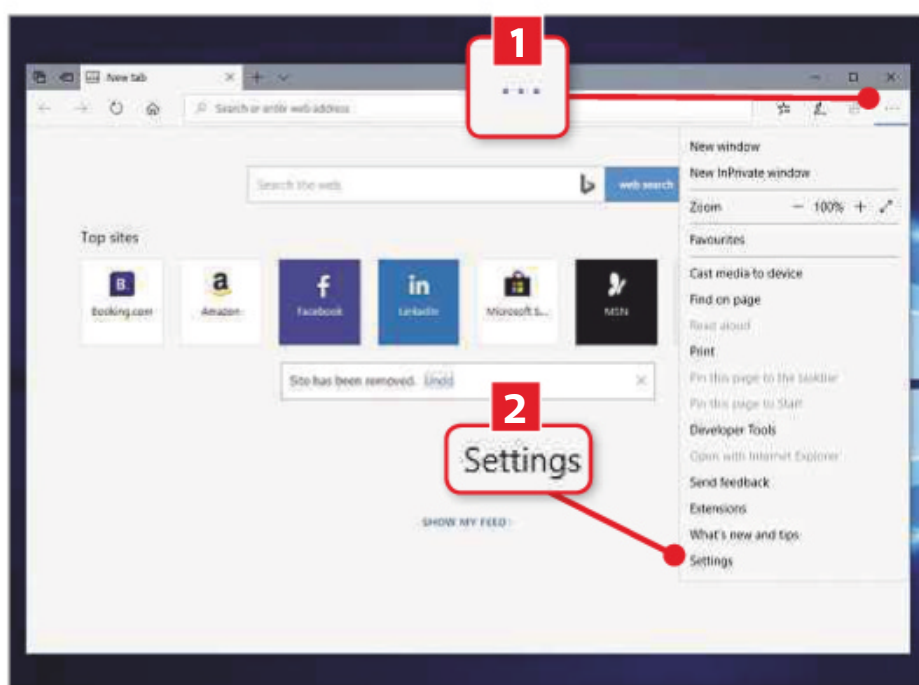
STEP 1 Download and open WebLynx (www.snipca.com/30823), then create your first bookmarks file by clicking New... **1** and giving the file a name **2**. Click Save, then tick the box beside 'Automatically open last file on start' **3** so that every time you open WebLynx your bookmarks will be ready to use. The first step is to import any bookmarks you've already saved in Firefox, Chrome or Internet Explorer. First, click the Management tab **4**.



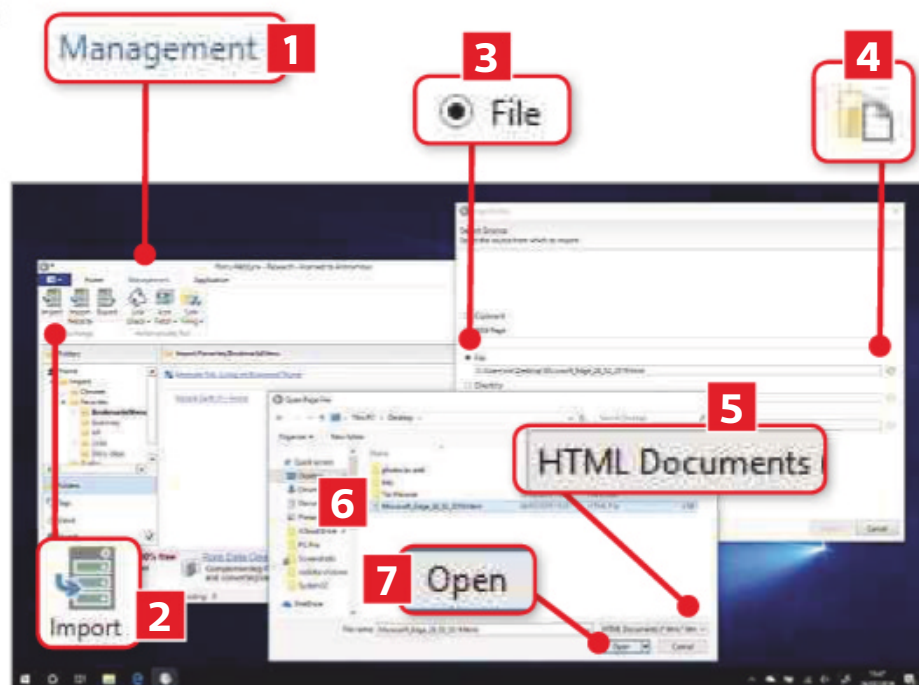
STEP 2 Next, click the Import button **1** on that tab's toolbar. Select either Favourites (Internet Explorer), Firefox or Google Chrome **2**, depending on which browser you want to import your bookmarks from. Click Next **3**, then choose the folder you want to store them in. WebLynx already has folders set up for Chrome, Favourites and Firefox so, unless you have a good reason for doing otherwise, select the folder that matches the browser you're importing from. Click Next.

STEP 3 WebLynx lets you tag your bookmarks so they're easier to find and manage in the future. There are seven default tags available, including Blog, Professional and Reference **1**. Click any that you want to apply to all your imported bookmarks, followed by the left-pointing arrow **2**. Use the field above the list **3** to create tags of your own, then click the arrow next to the field **4** to add these to the list of applied tags. Click Next **5**, then check the list of bookmarks that WebLynx is about to import. Clear the boxes beside any that you don't want, then click Import.

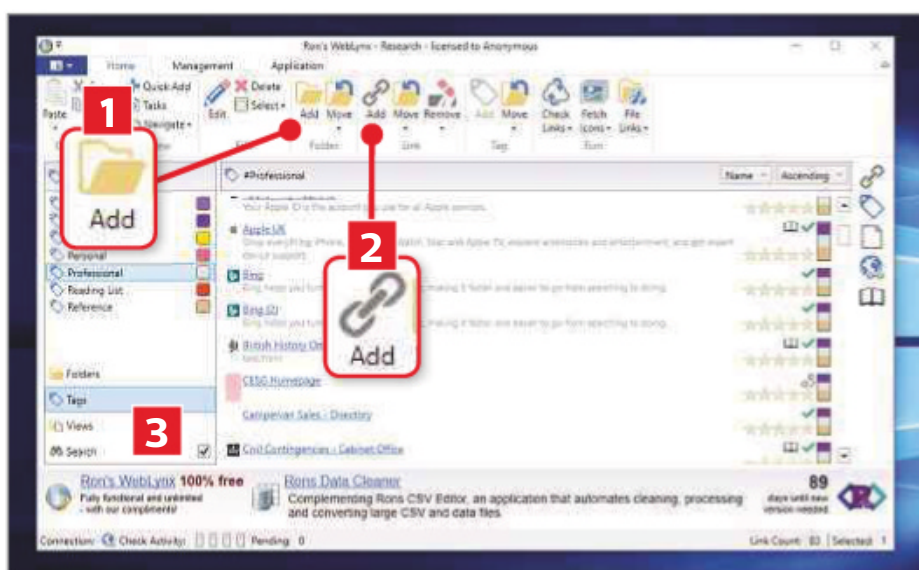




STEP 4 WebLynx can't import your favourites directly from Microsoft Edge, but you can work around this by exporting them from the browser then manually importing them. Launch Edge and open its menu by clicking the three dots **1** on the toolbar. Click Settings **2** then the 'Import from another browser' button, below the 'Import favourites and other info' heading. Click 'Export to file' and save the resulting web page that it compiles to your desktop. The name is unimportant, so you can leave it as it is – just as long as you can find it again for the next step.

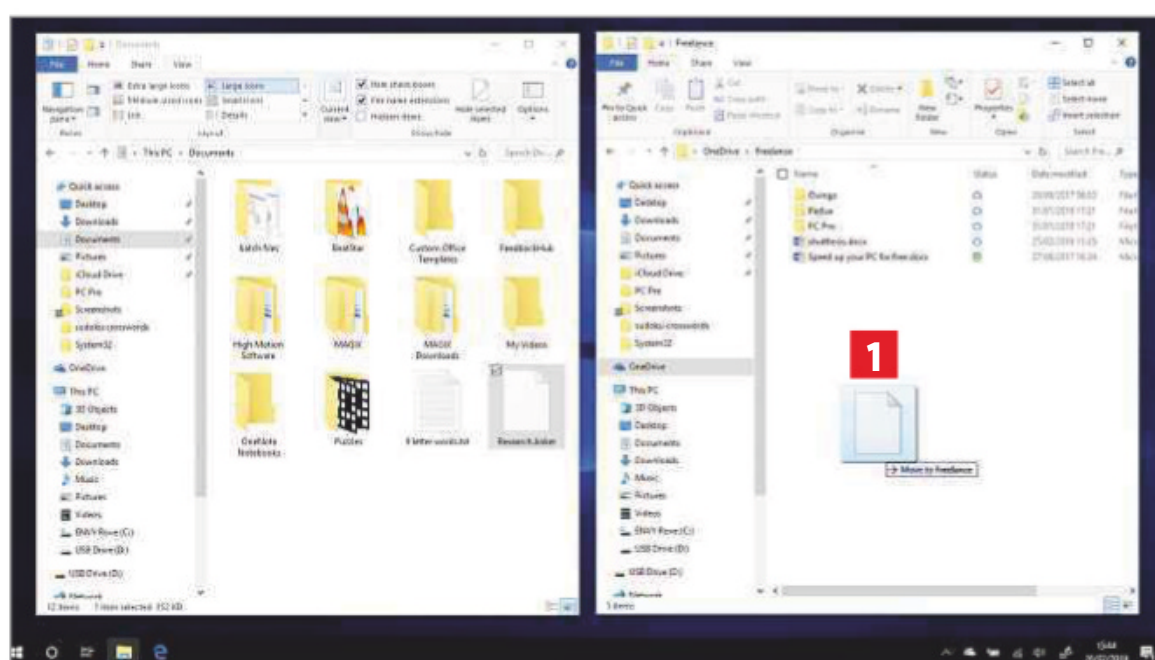


STEP 5 Next, in WebLynx click Management **1**, followed by Import **2**. Select File **3** in the import options, then click the icon to the right of the box below **4**. Select HTML Documents in the file types menu **5**, navigate to the file you exported from Edge **6** then click Open **7**. On the following screen, choose which folder you'd like to save the bookmarks in. There's no default for Edge, so put them wherever makes most sense – you can move them later on. Click Next, then apply tags, as in Step 3, before pressing Next followed by Import to complete the process.



STEP 6 As your bookmark collection grows, it's a good idea to make sure everything is filed logically. Create new folders by first highlighting the folder you'd like them to sit inside (in the Folders pane) then clicking Add **1** in the toolbar's Folder section. You can then simply drag and drop links between folders if you want to move them. You can manually add bookmarks by clicking Add **2** in the Link section. To sort your saved bookmarks, click Tags or Search **3** at the bottom of the sidebar.

STEP 7 Whenever you click a bookmark, it will open in your default browser, even if it wasn't created or imported from there. If you work across multiple machines, as well as multiple browsers, it's a good idea to move your WebLynx file to online storage. Quit WebLynx and drag the file you created in Step 1 from its current location to a synchronised folder on Dropbox or OneDrive **1**. Re-open WebLynx, click Open... then navigate to the new location. Install WebLynx on any other machine you use and, instead of creating new files on each of them, point them to the same links file in your online storage.



Readers' Tips

TIP OF THE FORTNIGHT

Change BT router's settings to connect to 5GHz

I have just read Will Stapley's Cover Feature in Issue 548 about persuading your ISP to send you a faster router for free. This is of interest to me because I have just received a new BT Smart Hub 2 (pictured) for switching to BT's Superfast Fibre Plus package. The router performs very well and the single **mesh Wi-Fi** disc that I received with it gives me a huge boost in signal strength at my desktop PC which is, of necessity, a fair distance away.

However, the new router has one serious drawback: it is no longer possible to give the 2.4 and **5GHz**

networks unique **SSIDs** (BT confirms this on its website: www.snipca.com/30879). If you change one, the router automatically changes the other to match. When you ask Windows to display the available networks, only one of that name is shown and you take pot luck as to whether it is 2.4 or 5GHz.

In order to ensure that my PC connects to 5GHz, I have to go into the router's advanced settings to switch off 2.4GHz, connect to the network with the name I gave it, and then go back and switch on the 2.4GHz. My son uses 2.4GHz for his computer, as I do for my laptop which is



too old to have the option built in. Other users have suggested this solution on BT's Community Forum: www.snipca.com/30881.

Tom Inglis



Tom wins a copy of our 2018 Back Issue CD

Buy it on Amazon www.snipca.com/30307

AUDIO

Increase video volume when streaming to TV

Some of my MP4 videos have a low volume. When streaming, the TV's volume needs to be increased considerably. This can result in a deafening blast if I forget to reduce the volume for broadcast viewing.

I found a piece of software called Free Video Volume Booster (see screenshot), which overcomes this problem and allows a variable increase in MP4 volume. It's easy to use and can be downloaded

for free from www.snipca.com/30876. For a list of the developers' other tools, visit www.dvdavitoools.com/products.

David Ward



PODCASTS

Listen to Sherlock Holmes and Goon Show podcasts

Thanks for the superb Cover Feature in Issue 547 ('Download the Web's Best-kept Secrets'). However, the article is missing Fourble (<https://fourble.co.uk/podcasts>), which is an amazing source of free podcasts.

It takes files from other sources including the Internet Archive and turns them into podcasts. Users then have the option of downloading one a day, one every two days and so forth to one every seven days.

There are so many different podcasts, many of which are from the BBC. For example, currently available is the complete Sherlock Holmes BBC dramatisations – all 80 episodes (<https://fourble.co.uk/podcast/sherlockhbbc>), featuring Clive Merrison as Holmes and Michael Williams as Watson, written, largely, by Bert Coules.

In my view, these are the best audio interpretations of the Conan Doyle stories. To buy these would cost a small fortune.

Or how about the complete Goon Shows, 1951-1960 (<https://fourble.co.uk/podcast/goon>)? Yes, again all episodes are free.

There are so many, many more. I urge every reader to have a look at the Fourble podcast listing. It's like striking audio gold.

Julian Williams

Why I stopped using...

Windows System Restore

The problem with System Restore is that it's not very versatile. In particular, it can only be accessed once the computer has booted up.

And what I use instead...

Many years ago I learned from your brilliant magazine of a program called **RollBack Rx**, which takes 'snapshots' of your system either manually or on a schedule decided by you. It's saved my bacon time and again.

I use the paid-for 'Professional' version, which loads as the computer boots up and can be accessed even if Windows won't load. In the past I would have had to call out a computer

engineer to get me back into the system, as I'm an oldie with no technical knowledge. Now, I merely access RollBack from the boot-up screen, then choose a snapshot to roll back to.

In the paid-for version you can have as many snapshots as you like (it's limited to seven in the free version), going right back to when the computer was brand new. The program isn't cheap (\$49, about £37), but it's a snip when you weigh it against the cost of professional help. It can be found at www.snipca.com/30877.

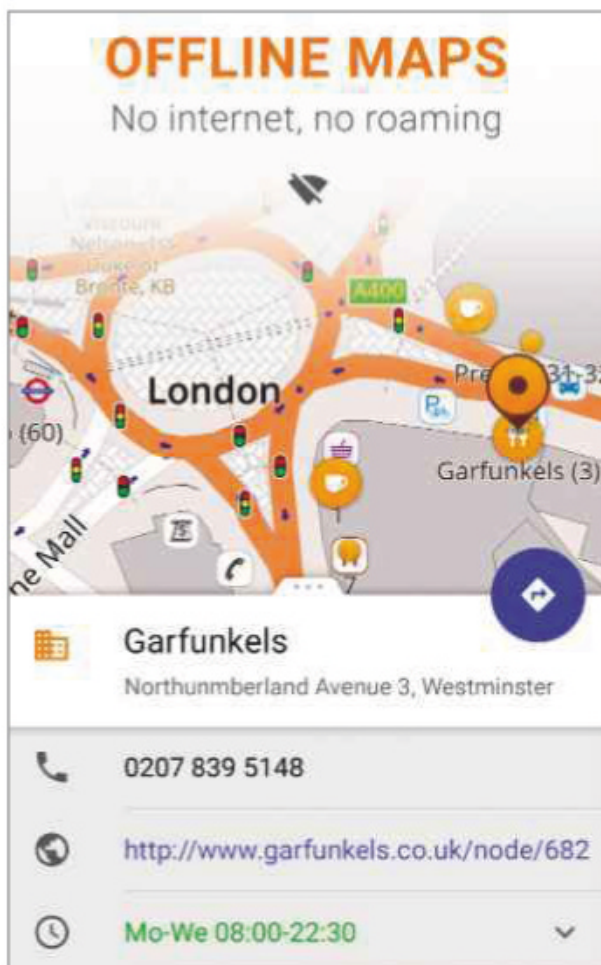
Carl Hughes



Tell us why you stopped using a website, app or program: letters@computeractive.co.uk

Handy hints and tips from your fellow readers

✉ Email us your tips: letters@computeractive.co.uk



MAPS

Download free maps to use offline on your phone

✓ Many years ago I followed *Computeractive's* recommendation and downloaded the excellent OsmAnd app for my phone (<https://osmand.net>, see screenshot above).

It comes with free maps taken from the OpenStreetMap database, and others can be purchased cheaply when needed. Best of all, it is designed to be used offline, which is a boon for those on pay-as-you-go (PAYG) contracts. It has served me well on my travels both here and abroad.

David Owner

Reader recommends...

Microsoft Surface Go

(£600 from Amazon www.snipca.com/29108)

✓ I'm quite an active 70-something, and need access to my Office files as I travel around the UK. In the past I've always struggled to find the right balance of portability and functionality. Laptops were either fast but too heavy, or light and too slow.

That's no longer the case. I bought the Microsoft Surface Go earlier this year, encouraged by your 'Great Pick' review in Issue 537 (page 23). After a word with my bank manager (aka the wife), I splashed out £600 on the version that gives you 8GB, and a 128GB SSD. Every time it boots in seconds and opens files smoothly. I'm grateful I made this decision.

Some of my techy friends said I should've bought a Chromebook instead, but I don't want to use Google



Drive for writing documents and creating spreadsheets. I know Microsoft Office inside out, so I needed a portable device purpose-built for using these tools. In this regard, the Go is perfect.

Tony Verne

✉ Want to recommend hardware or software to fellow readers?

Email letters@computeractive.co.uk

OFFICE

Position images in Word docs

✓ In Issue 548's Make Office Better (page 47), you write a very comprehensive method for changing the layout options for a picture in a Word document. There is a much simpler and faster way to do this, which also lets you change the position more easily.

Click the image you have pasted into your Word file, then click the small options button on the right of the image

(see screenshot below). You will be offered different flow options to position your image. Simply click an option, then drag your image to wherever you want it. You can click 'See more...' to get even more options. If you don't see the options button, right-click the image, then left-click Wrap Text and pick your option. Hope this is of some use to fellow readers.

Fraser Drummond

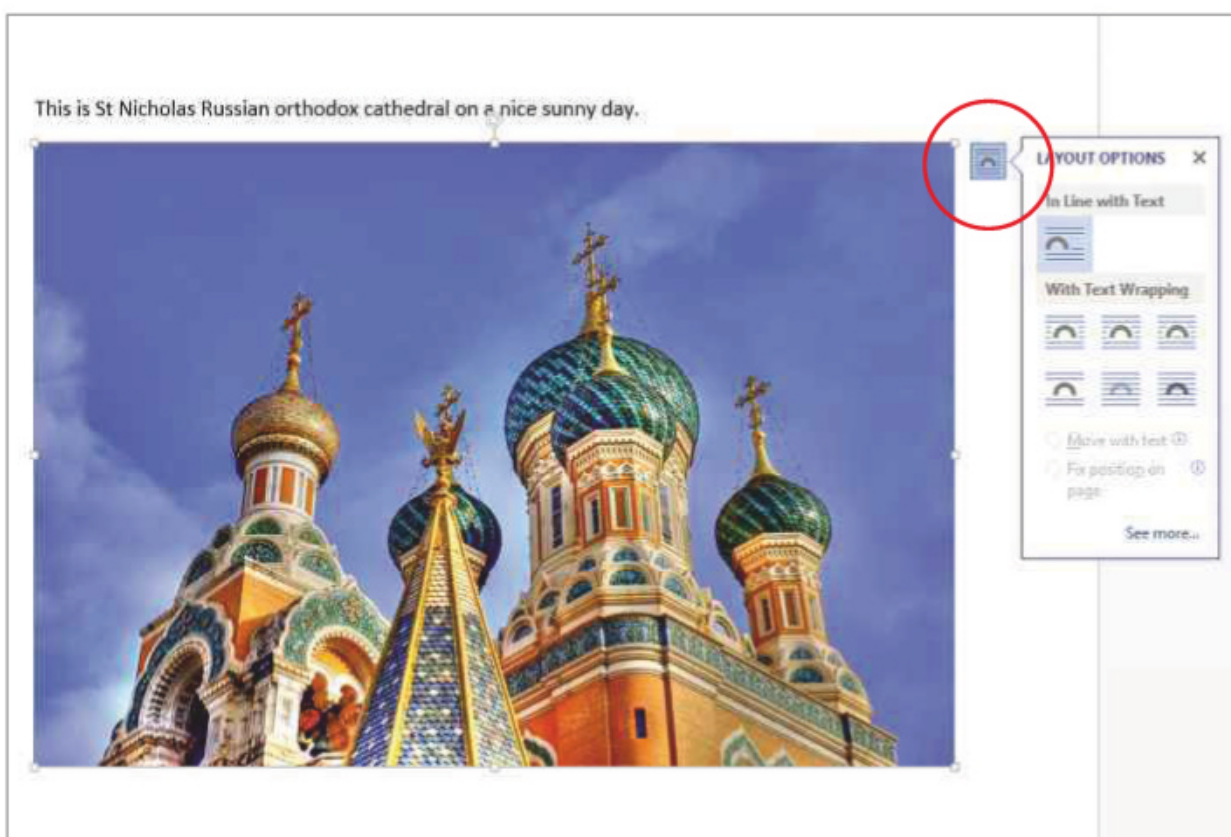
SMART TV

Consider TaoTronics for Bluetooth dongles

✓ I was reading Problems Solved in Issue 548 and saw on page 67 the request from Eric Grand about adding Bluetooth to a smart TV. You recommended an Mpow dongle (£17 from Amazon: www.snipca.com/30506). However, TaoTronics (www.taotronics.com) also have Bluetooth dongles that you can plug into a TV's USB socket, assuming you have one.

There is also a version whereby you can connect two headsets or a combination of Bluetooth devices to the same TV. I know this because I use TaoTronics in both single and dual types to connect to Bluetooth headphones. Incidentally, I believe TaoTronics was recommended by your good selves some time ago.

Jim Jackson



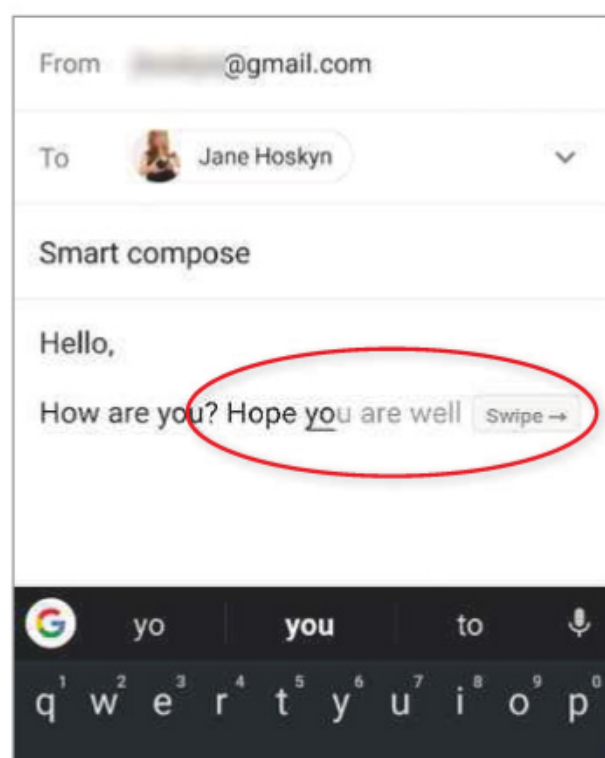
Phone and Tablet Tips

ANDROID

Write emails faster with Gmail's sentence-completing tool

Whether you love or hate the latest feature in Gmail's Android app may depend on how you feel about predictive text and people who finish your sentences for you.

Smart Compose (www.snipca.com/30949), which is enabled by default in the latest Gmail version (9.2.3 – www.snipca.com/30971), aims to free you from your fiddly keypad by auto-completing your emails. Its suggested words appear in grey, and you can add them to your message by swiping across them. For example, if you type **How are you? Hope**, it might suggest 'you are well' as the next



words (see screenshot below left).

We can see Smart Compose could be handy when you need to reply to an email at an inconvenient time, especially if it's a fairly impersonal message. And it'll become more useful over time, because it uses **machine learning** to understand your habits and personalise its suggestions.

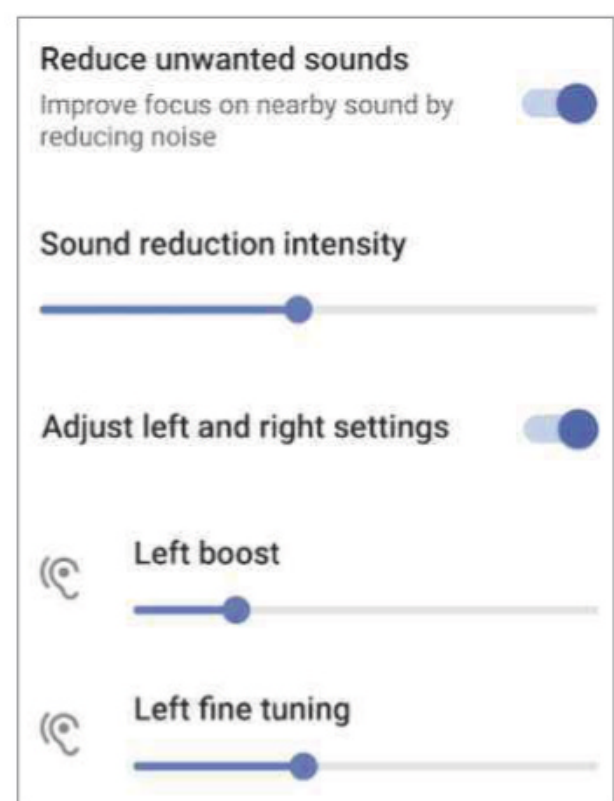
But the function, currently rolling out via updates to the Gmail app in all devices running Android Pie (9.0+), takes some getting used to and does feel intrusive at first. If you don't like it, it's easy to switch off. Tap the menu icon (three lines) in your Gmail app, then Settings, and then your email address. Scroll down and untick Smart Compose. You can tick to re-enable it at any time.

ANDROID

Use your Android to make the world easier to hear

Google has launched a couple of new apps that turn your Android device into a hearing assistant. Sound Amplifier (www.snipca.com/30950) lets you use your headphones to amplify and clarify the sounds around you, using audio mixers to obtain the appropriate levels for your hearing (see screenshot above right). Then there's Live Transcribe (www.snipca.com/30951), which converts live speech into text in real time via your device's microphone, and supports more than 70 languages.

Both apps are free to download from



the Google Play Store, although Live Transcribe is still in **beta** at the time of writing. In the coming months both tools will be built into Android, with on/off options in the Accessibility Settings.

Another free new app that could help improve your hearing is Night Video Player (www.snipca.com/30952, Android only). As its name suggests, it was designed for watching videos late at night – it cranks up the dialogue and tones down background noise (explosions and so on), so you don't wake up the house. But it works so well that we recommend using it at any time of day to clarify speech in films and TV shows, especially those without subtitle options.

BEST NEW APPS

What you should install this fortnight

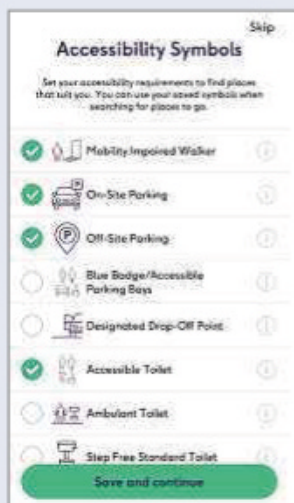
AccessAble

Free

Android www.snipca.com/30937

iOS www.snipca.com/30938

If you're in a wheelchair or less nimble than you used to be, take the worry out of planning trips by using this new app from www.accessable.co.uk (formerly DisabledGo). Search its huge database of UK locations and venues, and share your experiences.

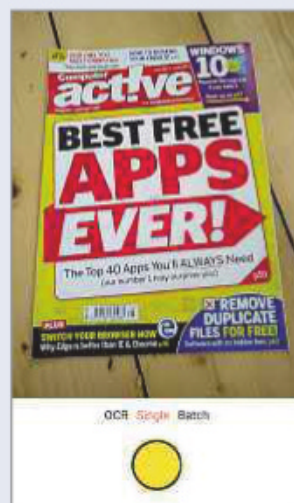


Super Scanner

Free

Android www.snipca.com/30993

Turn that messy pile of bills, letters and receipts into sharp, tidy PDF files with built-in OCR (optical character recognition), which converts to editable text. There's also image-editing and batch-scanning tools. Sadly, this outstanding app was launched too late for Jane Hoskyn to take advantage (see page 74).



Trackpad

Free*

Android www.snipca.com/30946

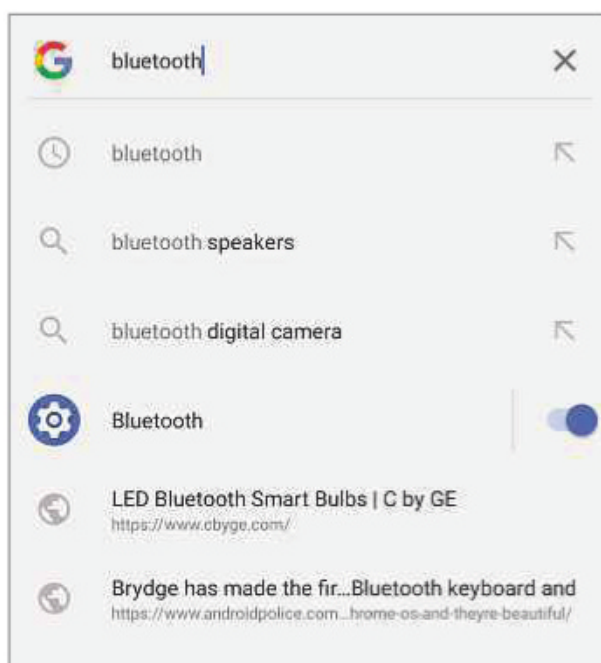
Tap tiny, hard-to-tap mobile browser links with ease, using this ingenious new

open-source app. Scroll your screen to position the cursor (a mouse icon) over your link, then tap anywhere on your screen to open it. Watch the demonstration video at www.snipca.com/30947.



*Contains in-app purchases

Brilliant things to do on your device



ANDROID

Search everything on your device from the Google box

Android's Google search box is about to get richer, busier and even more useful. Android Slices is a new built-in function that optimises Google search by including results from your device's installed apps, contacts and settings, as well as simply listing web links.

So if you search for 'headache remedies', you might see shortcuts ('Slices') to your health-tracker app and GP's phone number, along with the usual internet links. Search for 'taxi' and you might see your Uber app and local cab number. Search for 'Bluetooth' to open shortcuts to all your device's relevant settings and apps (see screenshot above). More and more functions will appear as shortcuts, as developers turn elements of their apps into Slices (www.snipca.com/30956).

Android Slices was launched last year and has only arrived on Google's high-end Pixel phones at the time of writing, but it's expected to be available on all devices running Android Pie (9.0+) soon.

ANDROID & IOS

Download programmes and films to watch offline

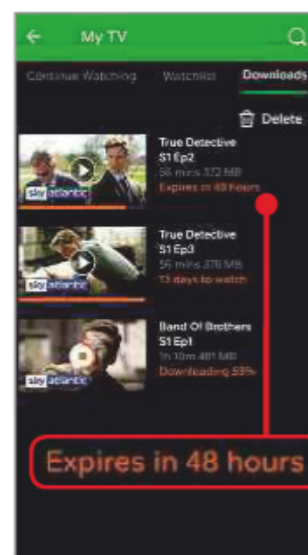
Sky's online streaming platform Now TV has finally updated its mobile apps (Android www.snipca.com/30953; iOS www.snipca.com/30954) to let you download shows and films for watching offline, thus avoiding the usual buffering and Wi-Fi woes. You could even switch to airplane mode to save your device's battery and avoid interruptions while watching.

To download a film or programme in the app, tap the little arrow next to its

listing. The downloaded file expires automatically 48 hours after you start watching it (see screenshot right), or after a month if you don't watch it.

Now TV's app is free to download, but you will need a subscription to stream and download video using it. A Now TV Entertainment Pass costs £7.99 per month after a 14-day trial; a Sky Cinema Pass is £11.99 a month (www.nowtv.com/tv-passes). Your pass lets you access Now TV on up to four devices – for example, your PC, Chromecast, phone and tablet.

Meanwhile, Netflix has finally launched



its Smart Downloads option on iOS (www.snipca.com/30955), several months after it debuted on Android (www.snipca.com/30957). Smart Downloads works like a podcast app, automatically deleting an episode when you've finished watching it and then automatically downloading the next episode in the series, as long as you're on Wi-Fi. Again,

the apps are free but you will need a Netflix subscription to watch anything (£7.99 per month after a 30-day trial, www.netflix.com).

BEST APPS FOR...

Gardeners

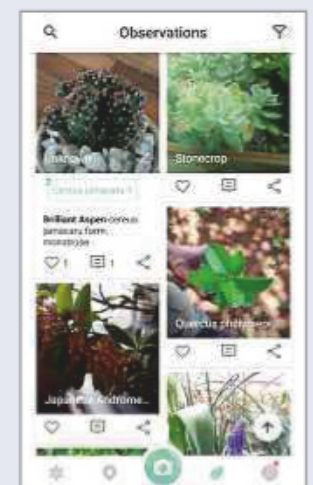
PictureThis

Free*

Android www.snipca.com/30941
iOS www.snipca.com/30942

Snap a plant using this new app, and it will use artificial intelligence and a 30,000-strong database to tell you what it is. You only get seven IDs free unless you upgrade to the Premium version, which costs \$1.99 (£1.52) per month after a seven-day trial.

Best For: A walk in the woods

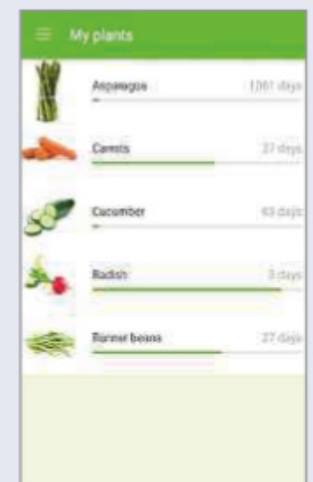
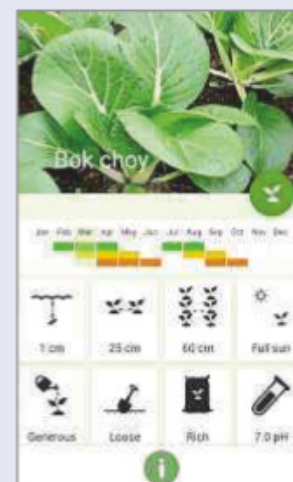


Gardroid

Free*

Android www.snipca.com/30945
Go self-sufficient and grow your own fruit and veg with the help of this new kitchen garden companion. It offers monthly tips on what to plant now, and includes tools for planning your crops, tracking their progress and setting harvesting alerts.

Best For: Cultivating classy carrots



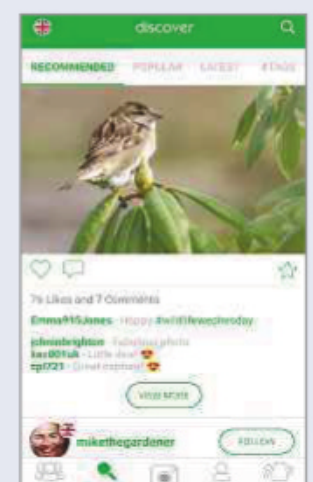
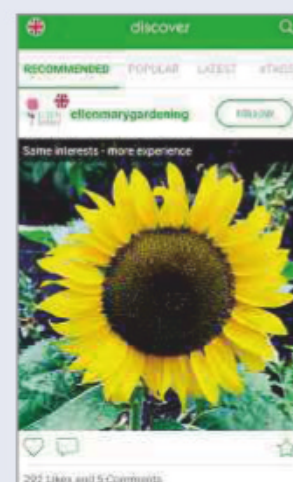
GardenTags

Free*

Android www.snipca.com/30943
iOS www.snipca.com/30944

Many of us do gardening to get away from people, but if you're more sociable you'll love this green-fingered network where you can share photos, get inspiration, seek advice and contribute to the crowd-sourced plant encyclopedia.

Best For: Showing off your garden to others



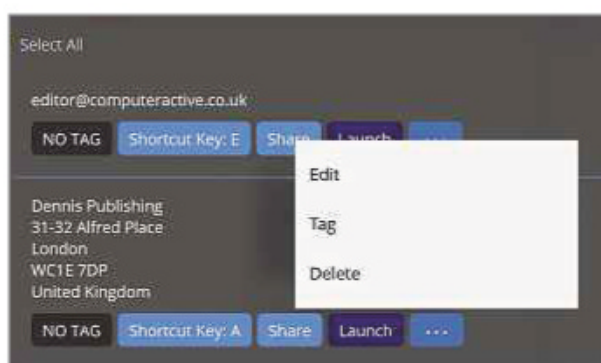
*Contains in-app purchases

WINDOWS 10

Create shortcuts for text you copy often



Copy Space is a useful free Windows 10 app that lets you save any text you type often (say, your address, email address, certain paragraphs in emails, and so on) to insert when you need it. You can then open the relevant app and instantly copy saved text and paste it into relevant websites or documents.



To install the app, press the Windows key, type **copy space**, click the 'Install app' link to open the app in the Microsoft Store, then install and open it. In the window that opens, type the text you want to save in the field below, then click the yellow tick at the bottom right. Repeat this to add more text.

Anything you add will appear in a list, with the most recent item at the top. Next, click the Shortcut Key button below any text, press any letter or number on your keyboard (for example 1, 4, A or E) to create a shortcut, then click Done. Click the three dots below any text to see options to edit or delete any of your items (see screenshot above).

There are two ways to copy any text you saved. You can either click the relevant text or press the shortcut key after opening the app, then paste the copied text.

WINDOWS 10

Trim videos without software



There's an easy way to remove unwanted sections at the start and end of a video using built-in Windows tools. Right-click the video, move your cursor to 'Open with', then click Photos. Next, click the 'Edit and Create' dropdown menu at the top right, then click Trim.

You'll now see two white dots at the start and end of your video (see screenshot right). Click and drag this to reset start and end points. The blue slider lets you play your video. When you're happy with your edit, click 'Save

WINDOWS 7, 8.1, 10

Add Chrome browsing history to your Windows Timeline

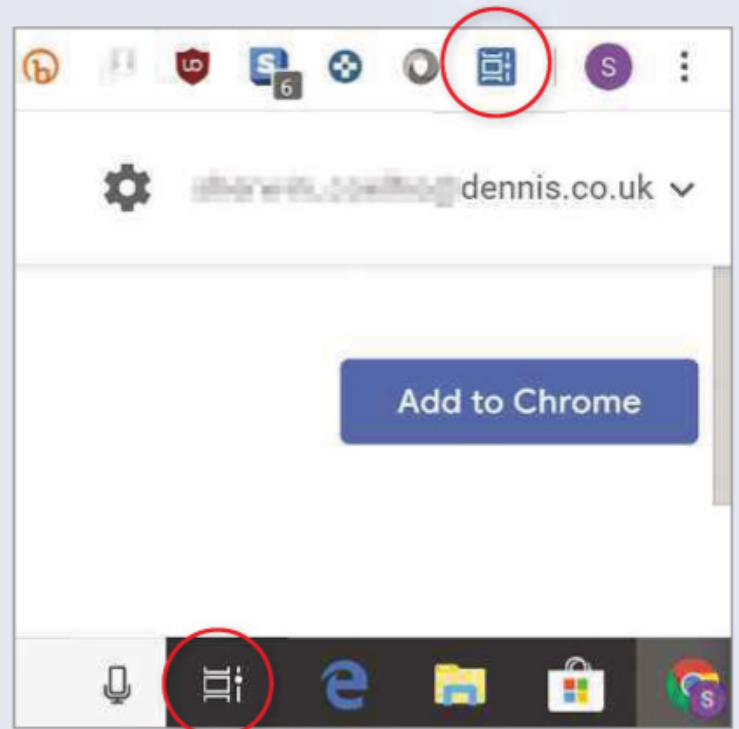


Microsoft has released a new

Chrome extension called Web Activities that lets you view your browsing history from any Windows 10 PC via Task View. This makes it possible to see websites you've browsed in Chrome recently by scrolling down your Windows timeline. To use these features, first click the Task View button on your taskbar (to the right of the search/Cortana bar – see screenshot) and scroll to the bottom of your timeline. If you see a 'Sign in' button, click it and log in using your Microsoft account details.

To install Web Activities, open the browser, go to www.snipca.com/30850, click the blue 'Add to Chrome' button, then 'Add extension'. You'll see a message in your browser toolbar saying 'Web Activities has been added to Chrome'.

Click the extension icon, 'Sign in', log



in using your Microsoft account details, then click Yes. The icon will now turn blue (see screenshot), indicating that Chrome is keeping track of any web pages you visit.

From now on, whenever you want to see a list of the web pages you've visited recently in Chrome, simply click the Task View button and scroll down your timeline.

as' at the top right, then rename and save the edited video on your PC.

WINDOWS 8.1, 10

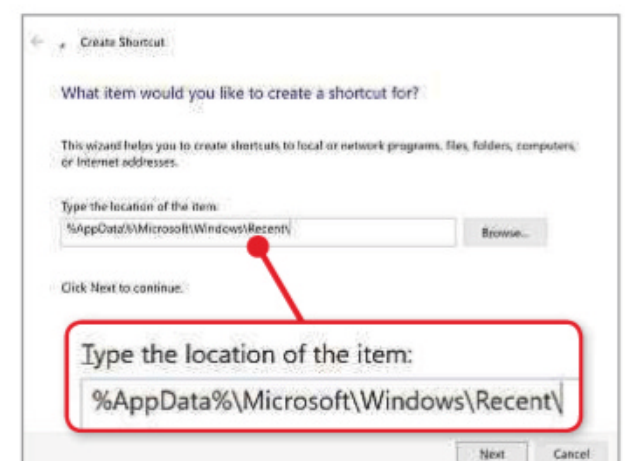
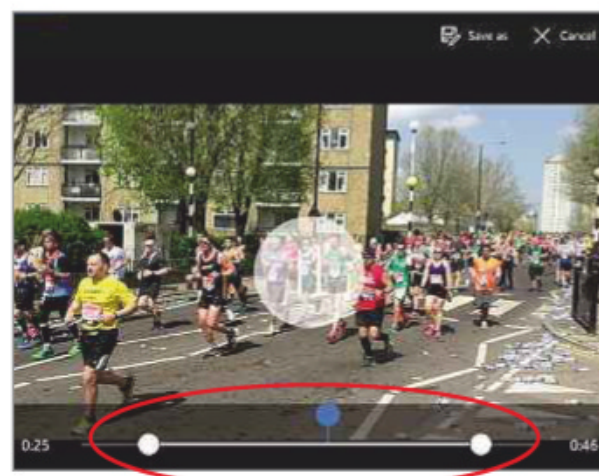
Access Recent Files from your Start menu



Windows 7's Start Menu has a useful Recent Items option listing the last few files you opened in Windows Explorer, but later Windows versions removed this. As an alternative, we'll show you an easy way


to access your Recent Files in Windows 8.1 or 10 by creating a desktop shortcut.

First, go to our pastebin account at www.snipca.com/30851 and copy the file path. Next, right-click any blank area on your desktop, move your cursor to New, click Shortcut, paste the copied text into the field provided (see screenshot below), click Next, then Finish. Now simply open the shortcut whenever you want to see a list of all your recent files.

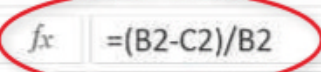


MICROSOFT EXCEL & LIBREOFFICE CALC

Calculate the percentage change in adjacent columns

 Using a simple formula, there's an easy way to find out the percentage change between cells in two adjacent columns in both Microsoft Excel and LibreOffice Calc. In our example, we have data for 2017 and 2018 in columns B and C respectively. Our formula will calculate the percentage change and display it in column D.

First, you need to calculate the percentage change from cell B2 to C2. After you've done that, you simply apply the same formula down column D. To do this, select cell D2, click inside

Font		Alignment	
			
B	C	D	E
2017	2018	Percentage change	
1000	700	30%	
900	680	24%	
500	450	10%	
950	670	29%	
800	690	14%	


the Function field at the top, type `=(B2-C2)/B2` (see screenshot), then press Enter. You'll see 0.3 inside cell D2. To

convert this to a percentage, click the Percentage symbol in the Number section of the Home tab in Excel. In Calc, click the Percentage symbol above column F. You'll now see the percentage change (30%) in cell D2.

To find the percentage change for all the other cells in column D, simply move your cursor to the bottom right of cell D2 until it turns into a crosshairs symbol, then drag it down the column.

POWERPOINT

Customise default animation effects in your slides

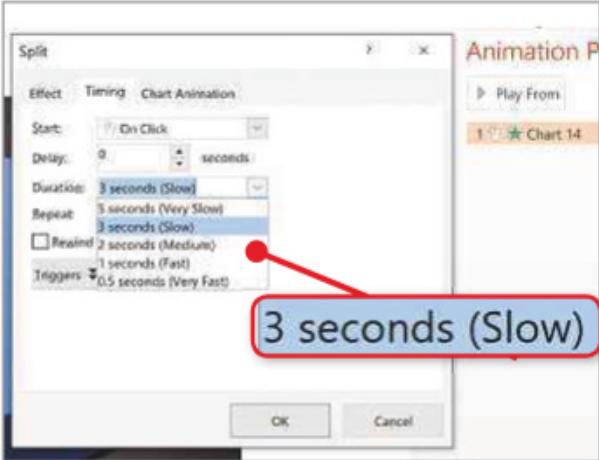
 You may already know how to insert charts into your slides then add PowerPoint's default animation effects to them, but you can also customise these effects for more variety. For example, you can choose when the animation starts, prolong the animation, and even divide a chart into sections and make each section appear one after the other.

To add a chart, click the Insert tab, Chart in the Illustrations section, select one of the options, then click OK. You can modify the chart's design by clicking the Design tab at the top then choosing one of the options. By default, the chart will display as a whole when you move to its slide. However, there are ways to emphasise different sections of the chart.

To do this, first click the Animations tab, select the animation style you want, then click the Animation Pane option at the top right of the tab. You'll see a pane on the right with your chart style.


Right-click the style name in the pane, then click Effect Options. You'll now see three tabs in the window that opens - Effect, Timing and Chart Animation.

Depending on which animation style you selected, the Effect tab lets you change the animation's direction and add sounds to it. The Timing tab (see screenshot below left) lets you set the animation to start when you click the slide or immediately after your previous slide. You can also choose to delay the animation slightly, and change its duration. Click the dropdown menu in the Chart Animation tab and select By Category, then click OK. You'll now see each chart section appear in sequence when the animation plays.



LIBREOFFICE WRITER

Make your cursor appear at your last editing point


 By default, whenever you open a saved document, LibreOffice Writer places your cursor at the start of the file. But there is a way to make your cursor appear at the place you were

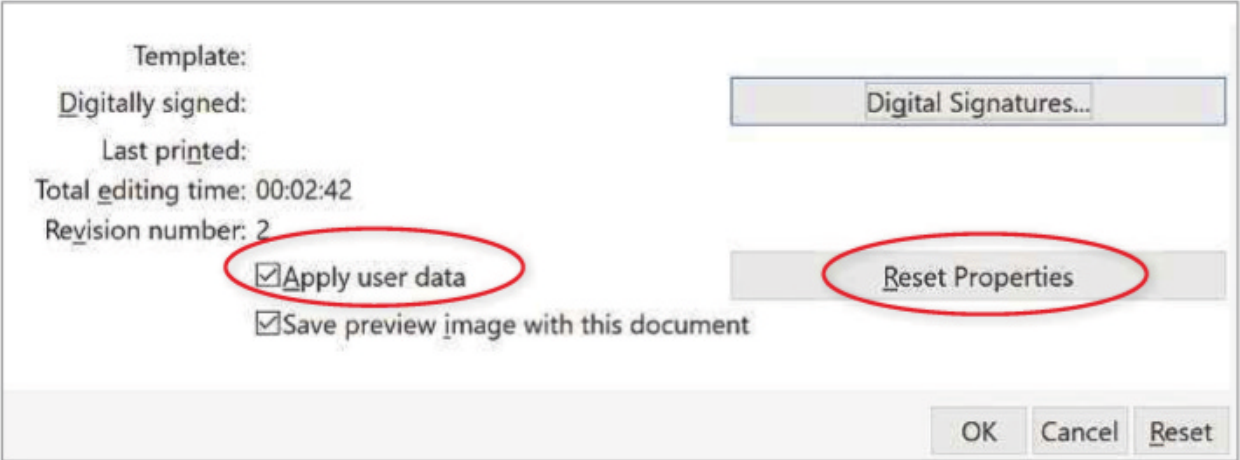
editing previously when you open your document.

To do this, click Writer's Tools tab, then click Options at the bottom. In the window that opens, click the LibreOffice menu at the top left, then select User Data. Now type your name in the 'First/last name/initials' field on the right, then click OK. Next, click Writer's File tab, then click Properties. In the window that opens, tick 'Apply user data', click the Reset Properties button, then click OK (see screenshot below). Now when you work on a document, then save, close and open it again, your cursor will appear at your last editing position.

WORD

Jump to your last editing point

 Microsoft Word has an easier way to carry out the tip above. Like Writer, Word automatically places your cursor at the start of the file when you open a saved document. To move your cursor to the point where you last edited this document, simply press Shift+F5 after opening it.



In The Club



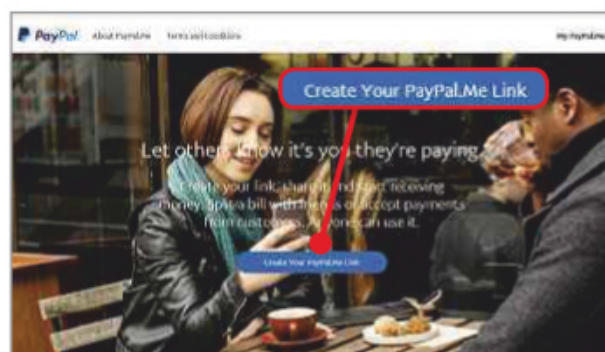
Run a club or society? Here's how your tech can make it easier

Collect membership payments and donations through PayPal

Cash is so 1990s. It's dirty and, if you're a small club that relies on it to settle dues and membership fees, counting and banking it is an administrative burden you could probably do without.

Fortunately, there's a simple solution, and it's one your members will probably be comfortable using already: they can settle their debts using PayPal. With just a smartphone, tablet or laptop to hand, they can even pay at the door if they forget to send you their money in advance, so there won't be any empty promises of "bringing it next week".

Although more often used to pay for eBay purchases, PayPal also lets your members send their fees direct from their bank account or linked debit or credit card to the club's PayPal account. Once there, it can be transferred to the club's bank account digitally. The whole process is quick to set up and easy to use, as we'll explain, and will free your treasurer from having to handle physical money at all.

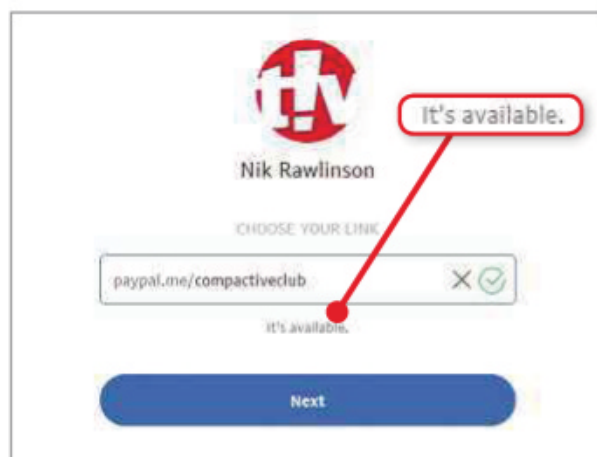


PayPal.Me lets you set up a dedicated link through which club members can pay you

Create a PayPal.Me account

Log into your PayPal account at www.paypal.com or, if you don't have an account, click the Sign Up button and work your way through the instructions to create one. Next, go to www.paypal.me, click 'Create Your PayPal.Me Link' (see screenshot above) and, on the following page, click Get Started.

Whenever you're collecting money, particularly if you're not going to be giving anything physical in exchange, you need to make sure that whoever's



PayPal will check that your preferred name is available – if not, it will suggest alternatives

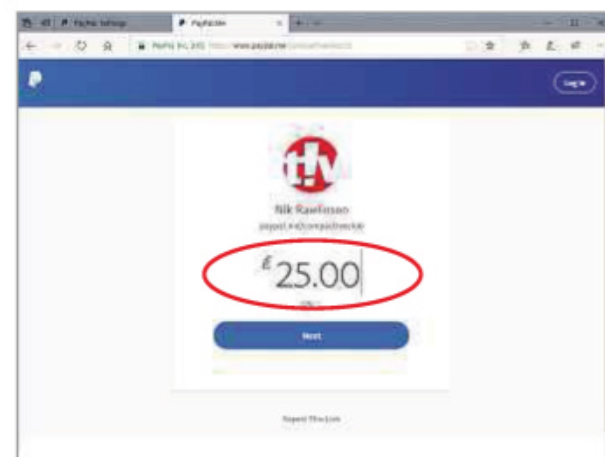
paying is confident they're sending their money to the right place. PayPal lets you do this by using your own club name in the link your members will use to pay you, and by adding a photo to help them identify you.

Click Add Photo and, in the Windows Explorer window that pops up, navigate to your club logo or other identifiable picture on your PC. Click Open to upload it. Any photo you add will be displayed whenever members are paying you, and will give them confidence that they are sending money to the correct recipient. If you don't have a photo, or don't want to add one, click 'Not now' instead.

Next, you need to create a link that members can click when they need to make a payment. It takes the form [paypal.me/\[your link\]](https://paypal.me/[your link]), so choose something recognisable and descriptive. PayPal will check that your preferred name is available (see screenshot above) and suggest alternatives if not. Click Next and, on the following screen, tick the box to consent to your details being shown so that users can find you easily. If you agree with the privacy statement, and the terms and conditions, click 'Agree and Create'.

Collect money using PayPal.Me

You can now share your link however you like, including by email and social media. When members click it, they can enter how much they want to pay and



Adding a value to the end of the link will pre-fill the payment form with the amount due

click Next, and PayPal will guide them through the process of sending you money.

If a specified amount is due, simply add it to the end of your link. So, if we needed members to send us £25, we'd send them the link paypal.me/compactiveclub/25 (this ensures the value is pre-filled – see screenshot above).

Alternatively, you can embed the PayPal.Me link on your website by pasting it directly. For a more professional finish, you should consider wrapping it around a PayPal logo. PayPal will host the logo itself if you use one of the snippets of code it provides on its website at www.snipca.com/31012. Click Get Code beside the graphic you want to use, then add it to your website using this formula, removing all of the square brackets: ` [the code for the image you copied from the PayPal site goes here] `

Manage your PayPal.Me link

You can suspend your PayPal.Me link at any time. To do so, log into your PayPal account and click the cog at the top of the page to open your settings dashboard. In the Profile box at the top left of the dashboard, click the Manage link that appears immediately below your PayPal.Me address. Next, click the switch beside 'Turn it on or off at any time'. If the switch is on the left, the link will be disabled.

What's All the Fuss About...

Windows Calculator

It all adds up to Microsoft learning to love open source

What is it?

An arithmetic calculator program, introduced with Windows 1.0 in 1985 and included in every version since. A scientific mode was added in Windows 3.0 (1990), followed by tools for statistics and converting units in Windows 7.0 (2009). It hasn't been significantly improved since, though that may soon change.

How so?

Microsoft recently made Calculator **open source**, meaning anyone can see the code it was built with, and use this to tweak it and add new tools. Developers will also be able to build Calculator into their own apps and software, and fix flaws. Calculator's code – all 35,000 lines of it – is now available on GitHub (<https://github.com/Microsoft/calculator>).

What's GitHub?

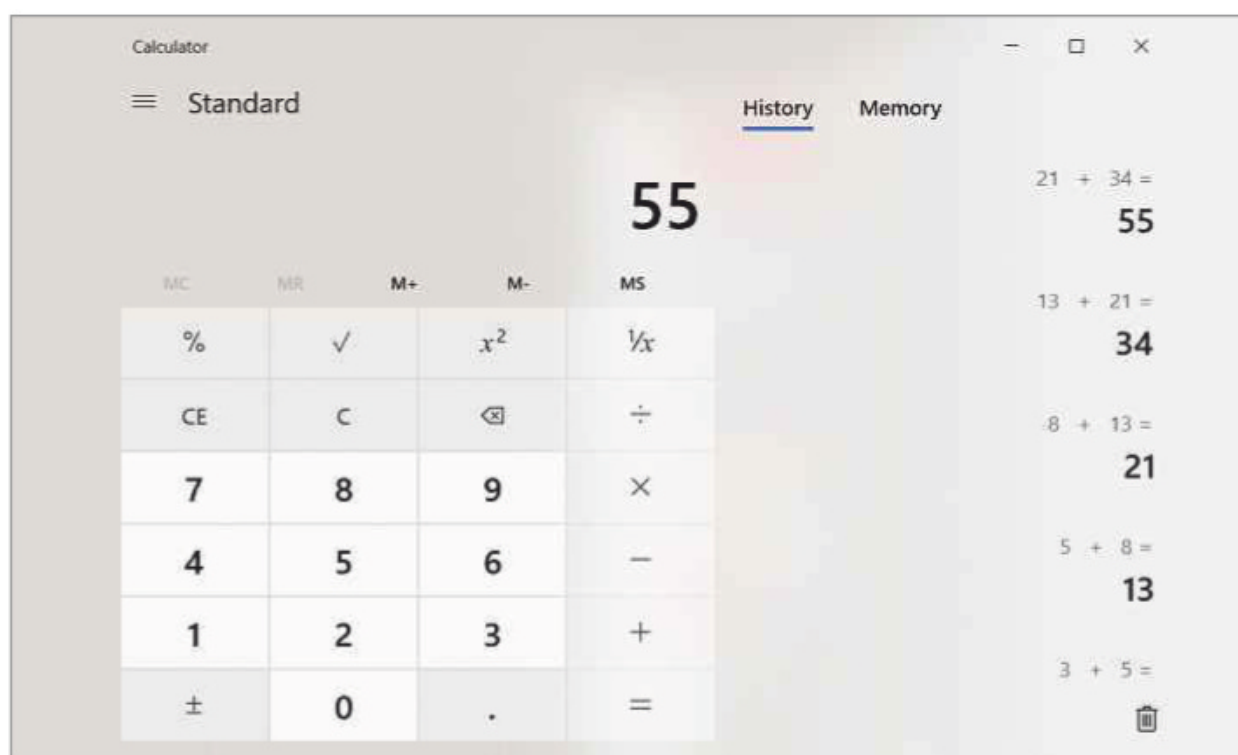
An online community of 31 million developers who work together on software projects. Microsoft bought it last year for a cool \$7.5bn (about £5.75bn). There's no better place for programs to be prodded, probed, pulled apart, examined and generally made better. Microsoft has asked GitHub's coders for "fresh perspectives and increased participation to help define the future of Calculator" (www.snipca.com/30948).

What tools might be added to Calculator?

Mathematically, there's little the Calculator can't do already, so most of the improvements will probably focus on *how* it works. Options include making it 'pin' on top of other windows (as requested by one frustrated user on Microsoft's forums: www.snipca.com/30991), and letting users customise its appearance.

Has Microsoft made other tools open source?

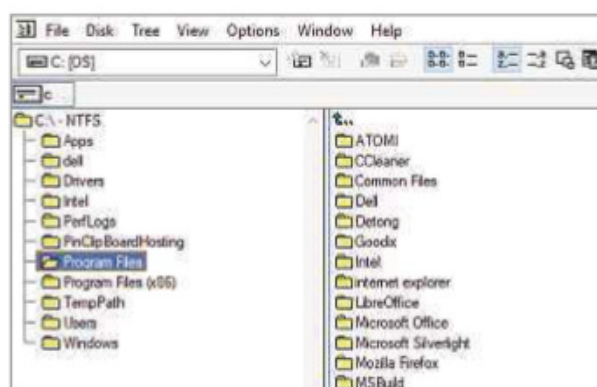
Yes, loads. You'll find 906 pages of them at <https://opensource.microsoft.com>, including the browser Edge, the Command Prompt replacement PowerShell and the programming



language TypeScript. These were joined last year by File Manager (see screenshot below), the popular tool for copying, moving, deleting and searching for files that arrived with Windows 3.0, and survived until Windows Me in 2000. It's since been made available as an app for Windows 10, available from the Microsoft Store (www.snipca.com/30873). But Microsoft wasn't always so keen on open-source software. In fact, in 2001 then-CEO Steve Ballmer called open-source operating system (and Windows alternative) Linux a "cancer".

He said what?

His full quote ("Linux is a cancer that attaches itself in an intellectual property sense to everything it touches") tactlessly revealed Microsoft's fear of open-source programs. Because their code is freely



Remember this? Microsoft has made Nineties tool File Manager open source

available online, anyone can use it to make software. Microsoft previously hated this ethos because it's impossible to make money from (Ballmer also compared Linux to communism). It also once claimed that the development of open-source software was too erratic to lead to programs easy enough for the public to use. At the time, the company's sole business model was selling Windows and Office – leading examples of 'proprietary' programs, which are tools with a **source code** known only to the company that makes them.

So what changed?

Microsoft started to make a fortune out of Azure, which provides online servers to companies and organisations (Amazon and Google have similar services). Many of these firms use Linux as well as Windows, so Microsoft has to make sure Azure can cope with open-source software. It led to a cultural shift within Microsoft, as more developers learned to appreciate the benefits of open-source, encouraged by Satya Nadella, who replaced Steve Ballmer as CEO in 2014.

Overall then, Microsoft + open-sourcing = better software?

Yes. Even Windows Calculator couldn't sum it up better.

Don't Bin Your Old USB STICKS

Got a drawer full of old USB sticks? Don't take them to the tip! Jonathan Parkyn reveals 20 brilliant things you didn't know they could do



Not so long ago, the ubiquitous USB stick was an essential piece of hardware. Physically more portable than an external hard drive or a recordable DVD, but offering generous capacities at low costs, these brilliantly flexible storage devices helped

us perform vital tasks, such as backing up data, transporting files from between PCs, and more.

These days, though, it's easy to find yourself with a drawer full of the things, no longer serving any purpose other than to gather dust. You can blame that on the rise in mobile devices with their own built-in storage, and the simultaneous proliferation of free 'cloud' storage. Together, these factors have rendered the once all-conquering USB stick more or less redundant.

But instead of tipping your drawer of flash memories into the bin, why not put them to use? USB sticks can be used for so much more than just shuttling files from one PC to another.

In fact, there are many clever ways to breathe new life into your old storage

devices. For example, depending on the capacity of your USB sticks and the tools at your disposal, it's possible to convert them into your very own portable PC-on-a-stick.

You can also re-enlist USB sticks as security devices to protect your PC or files, conscript them into service as handy tools to fix PC problems, and much more.

Over the next few pages, we'll show you 20 brilliant new hacks and tricks that will transform your old storage sticks into a selection of genuinely useful tools. For each one, we'll also tell you which size of USB stick you need – some will even make use of your sub-1GB sticks.

However, if you're still determined to get rid of your old USB sticks after all that, we'll explain how to dispose of them securely.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Make a secure USB vault on which to store personal files
- Browse the web securely and privately on any computer
- Create your own portable apps USB toolkit
- Record and share TV programmes using a PVR



ACCESS YOUR DESKTOP & SOFTWARE ANYWHERE

1 Run Windows 10 from a USB drive

Minimum USB size 16GB

Believe it or not, it is possible to install and run Windows 10 in full from an old USB stick. And we don't mean just copying a Windows 10 ISO file to it.

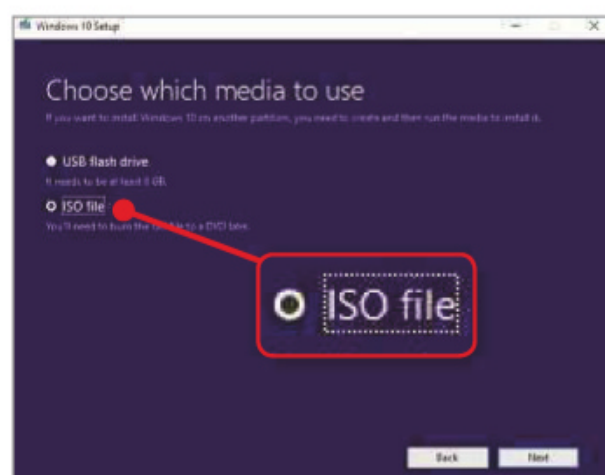
We're talking about a proper Windows 10 installation with the latest October 2018 update that will let you boot directly to your very own, personalised copy of Windows on *any* PC you plug the drive into.

For this, you'll need a decent-sized USB stick – it will work on a 16GB stick, but we recommend at least 32GB because this will give your portable PC its own permanent storage to play with. You'll also need a copy of Windows and a free tool called WinToUSB, which will let you install Windows on to the drive.

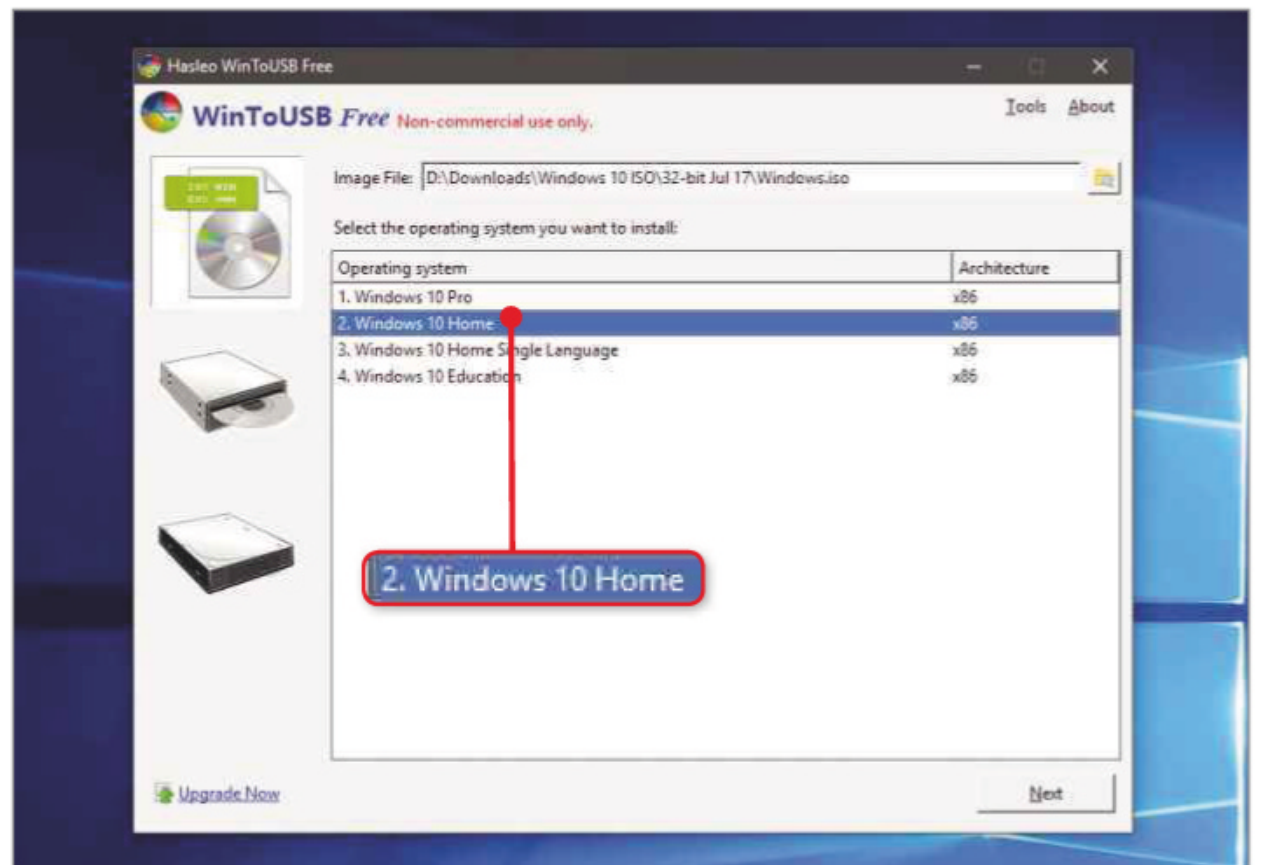
To get Windows 10, head to Microsoft's download site at www.snipca.com/30897 and click 'Download tool now'. Run the Media Creation Tool, selecting the 'Create installation media' option. Don't select the USB flash drive option when prompted, though. Instead, choose the 'ISO file' option (see screenshot below), which will download a copy of Windows 10 to your hard drive first.

Next, download the free version of WinToUSB from www.easyuefi.com/wintousb. Version 4.5 supports the latest edition of Windows 10. Run it, then click the browse button next to the Image File box to look for the Windows ISO file you just downloaded. In the 'Operating system' window, select the version of Windows 10 you want (we chose Windows 10 Home – see screenshot above right), then click Next.

Select your USB stick from the dropdown menu on the next screen, then select 'MBR for BIOS' in the pop-up window (this will provide maximum



Select the 'ISO file' option when downloading Windows 10



Once you've downloaded the ISO from Microsoft, tell WinToUSB which version you're installing

compatibility) and click Yes. Select 'Legacy' if you're prompted to choose a partition method.

Windows will now be installed on to your USB stick, erasing any other files you might have stored on it. Once complete, plug the stick into any PC and restart it – bear in mind that you may need to change the PC's boot priority, in order to bypass the hard drive and boot to your USB drive instead (see box on page 52).

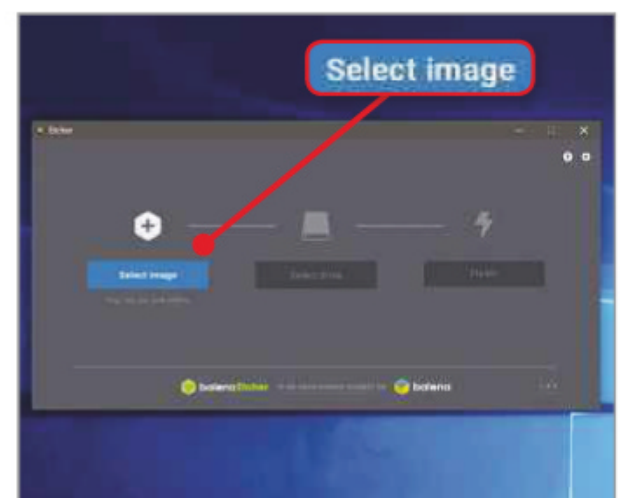
The one drawback with running Windows 10 from a USB stick is that you'll need to pay to activate your new copy of the operating system – currently £120 if from Microsoft; it'll still work without activation, but some features will be locked and you'll constantly be reminded to activate. There is, however an alternative that's completely free...

2 Run a smaller operating system on a USB

Minimum USB size 2GB

If you don't like the idea of paying for another copy of Windows, or don't have a big enough USB stick, you can still create a smaller (and completely free) portable computer using Linux. The principle is the same as above; you'd just be installing and running a different OS from your USB stick.

Linux isn't nearly as easy to use as Windows, but it's easier to install than you might imagine. Some versions, such as Linux Mint, look and work just like



Use Etcher to install Linux Mint on USB sticks as small as 2GB

Windows and come with tons of software – office suites, media players and more – preinstalled.

To give it a go, download Linux Mint from <https://linuxmint.com/download.php> – there are several versions, but we recommend Cinnamon 19.1. This was released just a couple of months ago and includes new features, such as a tool that lets you quickly switch desktop layouts. Now download a tool called Etcher from www.balena.io/etcher – this will install Linux to your USB stick. Get the portable version of Etcher if you'd rather not install the tool.

Now grab your USB drive – a 4GB one will give you lots of room to store files, but 2GB will work too – and run Etcher. Click 'Select image' (see screenshot above), then browse to your Linux Mint ISO and click Open. Next, click 'Select drive' and browse to your USB stick, then

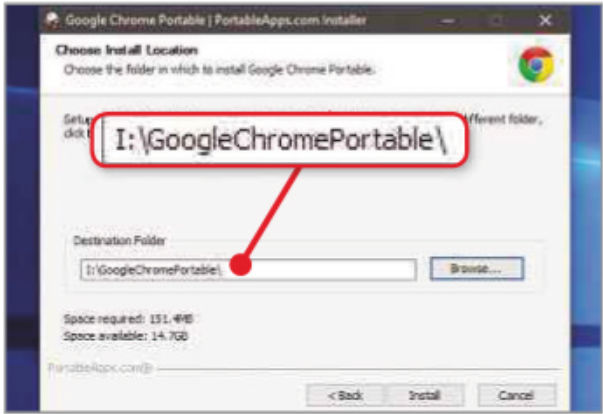
click 'Flash!'. As with the Windows 10 route, you may need to change your PC's boot priority before you boot to the USB drive.

3 Browse the web privately, anywhere

Minimum USB size 512MB

Running the portable version of Chrome from a USB stick means you'll always have access to your bookmarks and tabs without having to log into a stranger's PC or a public computer. But, most importantly, it means you'll leave behind precisely zero traces of your browsing on the host PC when you unplug the USB stick.

The newly released version 72 of Chrome Portable is available from www.snipca.com/30914. Download it, then run the executable file. Follow the installation



Chrome Portable will install in a 'Google ChromePortable' folder on your USB stick

process and, when you reach the Choose Install Location screen, click Browse and select your USB stick from the list. Chrome Portable will then install in a new 'GoogleChromePortable' folder on your USB stick (see screenshot above). You'll only need 500MB of free space on

your stick for Chrome and you can carry on using the rest for storage.

4 Create a personal portable apps toolkit

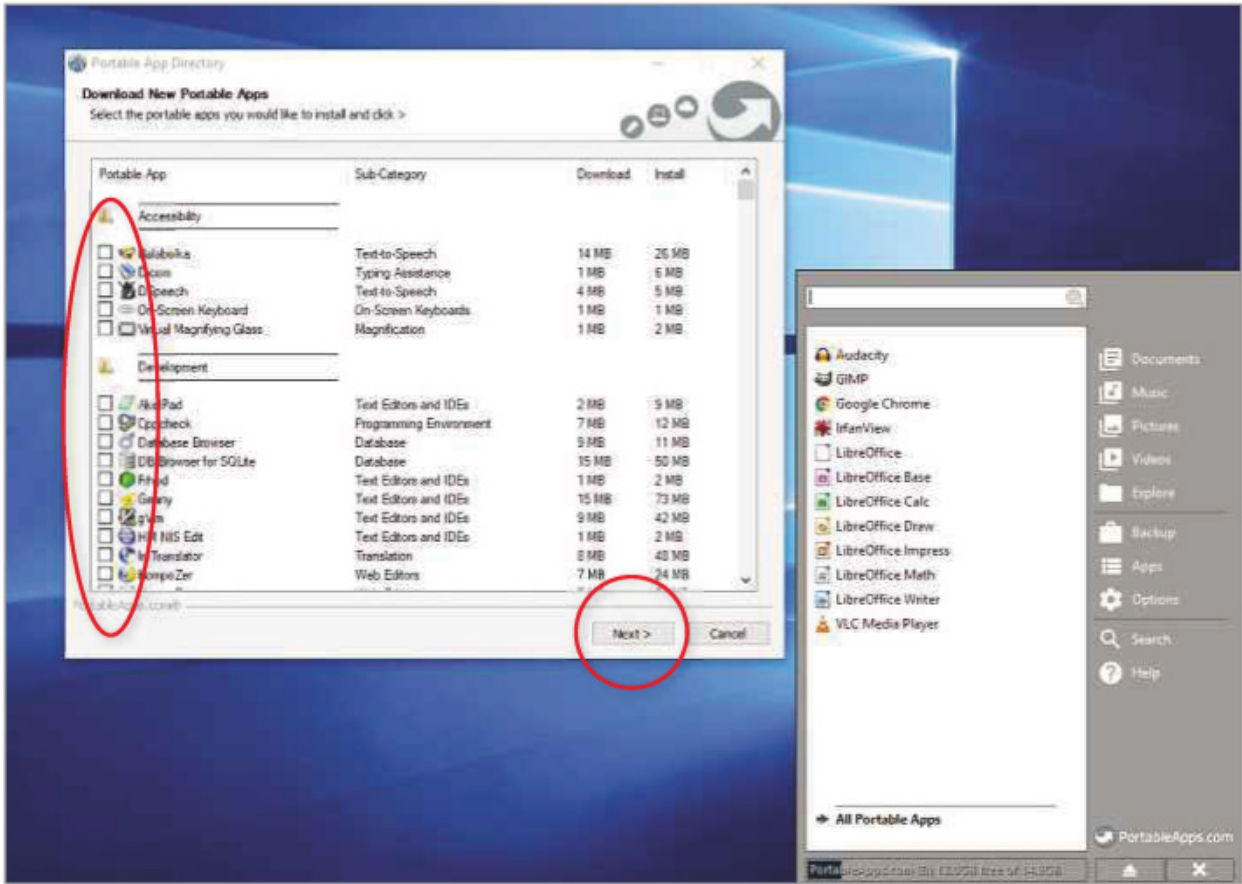
Minimum USB size 1GB

Why just stop at your web browser when you can cram your USB stick full of the best tools around? There are hundreds of programs that, like Chrome Portable, can run from an external storage device, rather than being permanently installed on a host PC. So many, in fact, that it's a good idea to use a tool to help you find, manage and install the best ones for you. So, get the PortableApps tool from <https://portableapps.com/download> – the latest version (16) adds some great new features, including the option to pin portable apps to your taskbar.

Insert your USB stick, then run the installer and select the 'Portable – install to a portable device' option when prompted. Next, choose your USB stick as the destination.

To run the tool, double-click the Start.exe program from your USB drive. PortableApps will check for the latest versions of available tools and present you with a categorised list of portable tools that you can install. To add the ones you want, just tick the boxes and click Next (see screenshot left).

How about Gimp and IrfanView for image editing and browsing, LibreOffice for all your office needs and VLC for playing music and videos? If you want to store even more on your USB sticks, download 7-Zip. This lets you create and open almost all compressed file formats, including ZIP, RAR and LZH. All these apps are free, so your only limit is how much space you have on your USB stick.



Select which programs you want on your portable toolkit, then click Next

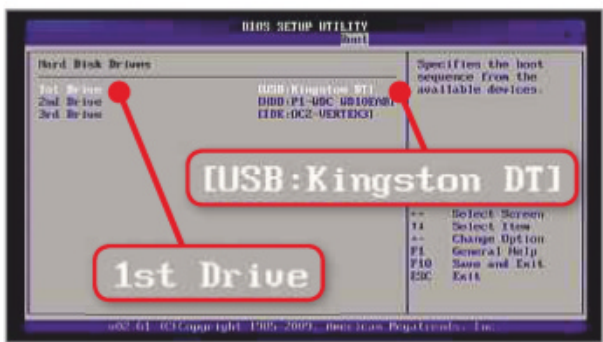
How to boot from your USB stick

We've talked a lot about creating 'bootable' USB sticks in this feature, but you may find that your PC isn't set up to boot to USB devices by default.

If Windows just starts as normal whenever you try to boot to a USB stick, you'll need to check your PC's BIOS or UEFI settings to change the order in which your system checks for bootable devices so that USB gets priority over your internal hard drive.

The method for accessing these settings varies from PC to PC. On newer ones, you can access the UEFI by opening Settings, then clicking 'Update &

Security', Recovery, then 'Restart now' under 'Advanced start-up'. When your PC restarts, click Troubleshoot, 'Advanced options', then UEFI Firmware Settings. On older PCs, you'll usually need to tap a specific key (often Del or F2) during boot to access the BIOS.



Once you're there, look for any settings that are labelled Boot Order, Boot Priority or similar. Navigate to these, then make sure that USB or 'Removable devices' is higher up the list than your hard drive – you may need to use your keyboard to navigate and select options.

On our computer, we set our Kingston USB drive to be the first boot device (see screenshot left). Once you've made the changes, select Save (this may be a menu option or a keyboard shortcut, such as F10 in our example), then exit and restart your PC.



MAKE YOUR PC MORE SECURE

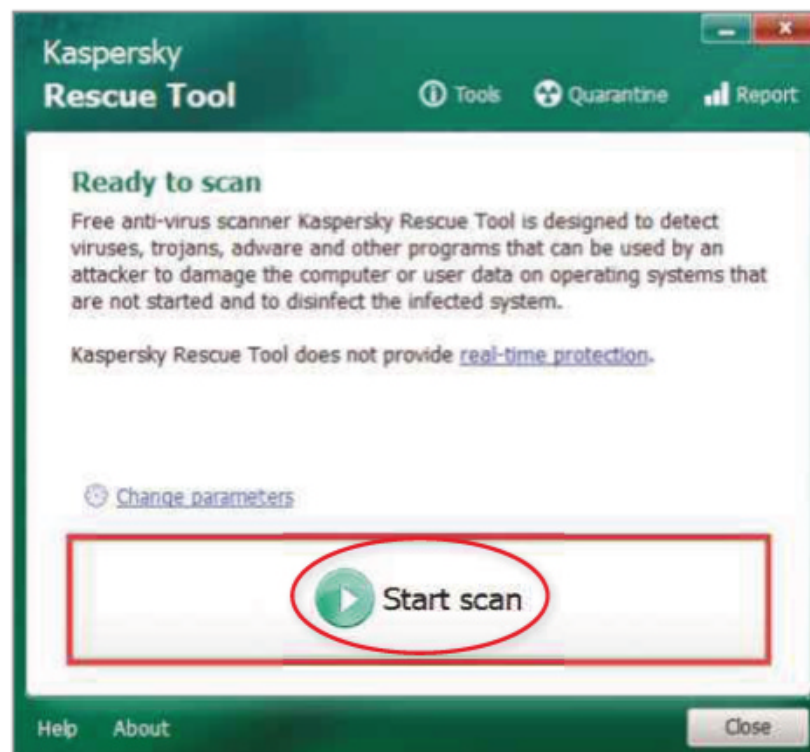
5 Make a bootable, on-demand malware scanner

Minimum USB size 512MB

There's some particularly unpleasant malware out there that even your security software might not protect you from. **Ransomware**, for example, can prevent you from accessing your antivirus (AV) tools, while others block all your security software from updating or even carrying out a scan. If one of these nasties ever makes it through your defences, having a bootable, on-demand virus scanner on a USB stick can be a lifesaver.

There are dozens of free bootable AV tools available, but Kaspersky Rescue Disk 18 (www.snipca.com/30915 - requires a minimum 1GB USB stick) and Bitdefender Rescue CD (www.snipca.com/30916 - 512MB) are among the most recently updated. Both are supplied as ISO files, so see tip 12 on page 55 to find out how to install them properly on to a bootable USB drive, and refer to the box on page 52 to see how to make sure your PC can boot to USB devices.

With that done, keep your security stick somewhere very safe so that, in an emergency, you can plug it in and restart your computer to scan and disinfect (see screenshot above right).



Install the latest Kaspersky Rescue Disk on to a USB stick, then scan for viruses when Windows won't load

6 Create a secure USB data vault

No minimum USB size

If you have certain files and documents that you want to keep safe from prying eyes (such as financial details), or if you want to take your travel documents (passport scans, insurance policies, e-tickets and so on) with you on holiday, you'll want to ensure they're safe. There's an easy way to carry them on a USB stick: encrypt them.

VeraCrypt is one of the best free encryption tools around. With it, you can create a virtual encrypted disk on any

drive - including a USB stick. Anything stored in the encrypted area will be inaccessible to anyone who doesn't have the password to unlock it. Download the recently released v1.23 of VeraCrypt from www.snipca.com/30917 - there's a portable version if you prefer - and run it (see Best Free Software, page 18, for more on this new version of VeraCrypt).

Click Create Volume, then select 'Create an encrypted file container' (see screenshot below) and click Next. Choose 'Standard VeraCrypt volume', then select your USB stick as the location for your encrypted volume. Follow the remaining steps, choosing how much disk space you want to allocate and entering a password when prompted - don't forget this or you'll lose access to your files. There's no minimum size for the USB stick, so it's a great way to make use of any old sticks measured in MB, not GB.



Using Raptor, create a 'k3y' file on your USB stick, then enable the program

whipping it out will lock it. Ticking the 'Advanced configuration' box in the top left unlocks access to further options, such as a lock delay and password protection for USB Raptor's interface.

8 Create a Windows 10 recovery drive

Minimum USB size 512MB

Windows 10 has useful built-in tools for recovering your PC, fixing startup issues, restoring system image backups and more. It is supposed to boot to these automatically when it detects that you're having problems loading the operating system, but it doesn't always work this way.

By converting one of your old USB sticks into a recovery drive, you'll always have access to these tools, even if your PC suffers a catastrophic failure.

Plug in your USB stick, click Start, type **recovery drive**, then press Enter. You can tick the 'Back up system files to the recovery drive' box here, which will allow you to reinstall Windows from the

7 Turn any USB stick into a secure key for your PC

Minimum USB size 32MB

Want a quick way to secure your PC? Turn any old USB key into a secure key.

First, get USB Raptor from www.snipca.com/30920, then extract and run it. By default, it will launch in simple mode, which requires just three steps to create your USB lock.

Enter a password - you'll need this to unlock your PC if you ever lose your USB stick. Next, select your USB drive from the dropdown menu and click 'Create k3y file' (see screenshot above right). Finally, tick the Enable USB Raptor box and you're done. Plugging the stick in will unlock your computer, while



Use VeraCrypt to turn any USB stick into a personal, secure vault

BEST-SELLING

UPDATED!

PROGRAMS ON OUR SOFTWARE STORE



1 Kaspersky Internet Security 2019

(3 devices, 2 years)

Full price: £79.99

Our price: £34.99 (save 56%)



2 Norton Security Deluxe 2019

(3 devices, 1 year)

Full price: £59.99

Our price: £18.99 (save 68%)



3 iolo System Mechanic 18

Full price: £39.99

Our price: £16.95 (save 58%)



4 McAfee LiveSafe 2019

(unlimited devices, 1 year)

Full price: £89.99

Our price: £29.99 (save 67%)



5 AVG Secure VPN 2019

(5 devices, 1 year)

Full price: £64.99

Our price: £24.99 (save 62%)



6 Kaspersky Internet Security 2019

(1 device, 1 year)

Full price: £34.99

Our price: £17.99 (save 49%)



7 Norton Security Deluxe 2019

(3 devices, 2 years)

Full price: £109.99

Our price: £34.99 (save 68%)



8 Genie Timeline Professional 10

(1 PC, lifetime)

Full price: £44.95

Our price: £19.95 (save 56%)



9 Avast Internet Security 2019

(1 PC, 2 years)

Full price: £89.99

Our Price: £34.99 (save 61%)



10 Acronis True Image 2016

(1 PC)

Full price: £39.95

Our price: £6.95 (save 83%)

READER OFFERS

Buy these and more at exclusive reader discounts from the
Computeractive Software Store: <https://store.computeractive.co.uk>



recovery options, but you'll need at least a 16GB USB stick for this. If you've got a smaller stick (512MB and higher will be fine), leave this box unticked. Also, be aware that everything else on the drive will be erased. The recovery drive creation tool should detect your USB stick. Click Next, then Create. Once you're done, label your recovery drive and put it somewhere safe – along with your bootable malware scanner stick, perhaps.

9 Browse the web securely and privately

Minimum USB size 8GB

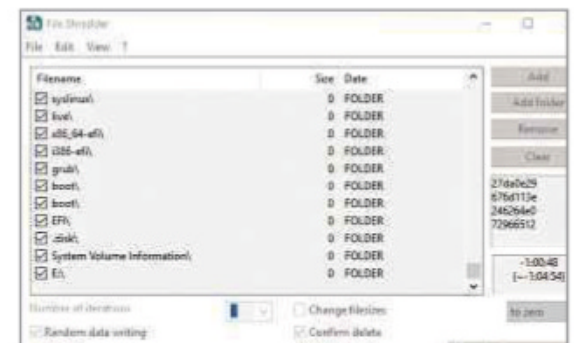
In tip 3, we demonstrated how to browse privately on any computer by running Chrome Portable from a USB stick. But if you're really concerned about privacy, you could go one further and run the Tails OS from your USB stick instead.

Tails is centred on keeping you anonymous online. It comes with its own pre-packed software selection, which includes the Tor browser, VeraCrypt and other privacy-related tools. By running Tails from a USB stick, you get your own completely incognito computing experience on a stick.

Installation is a little convoluted, but the Tails site provides a step-by-step process to walk you through it. Head to www.snipca.com/30928 and click Install

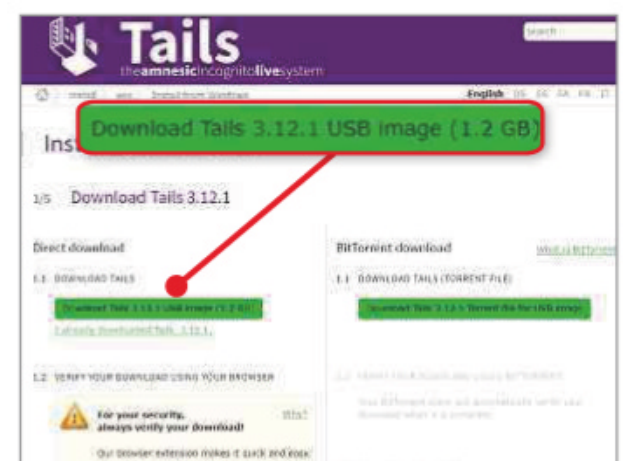
How to safely dispose of a USB stick

Before you give (or throw) away any unwanted USB sticks, be aware that – like hard drives – it may still be possible to recover files from them, even if you've erased all the data they contain. We therefore recommend using a file-shredding tool, such as the recently updated Alternative File Shredder (free from www.snipca.com/30936, pictured) to securely wipe your USB sticks clean before disposing of them. Plug the drive in, then fire up Alternative File Shredder and click 'Add folder'. Navigate to your stick, then click 'Shred files', 'Yes to all'. Then,



when it's done, click 'Shred free space'. If you're still concerned about sensitive files falling into the wrong hands, a heavy mallet and some protective eyewear might be your next stop.

From Windows, then Let's Go, and follow the remaining on-screen steps. You'll need to click 'Download Tails 3.12.1 USB image' (see screenshot right) then click 'Install Tails Verification extension' to install a tool that will verify the IMG file you downloaded. Once this process is complete, you can follow our instructions earlier for using Etcher (see tip 2) to install your image file to your USB stick (8GB or more is needed), this time choosing your Tails IMG file under 'Select image'.



Download the USB image file for Tails, then install it on a USB stick using Etcher

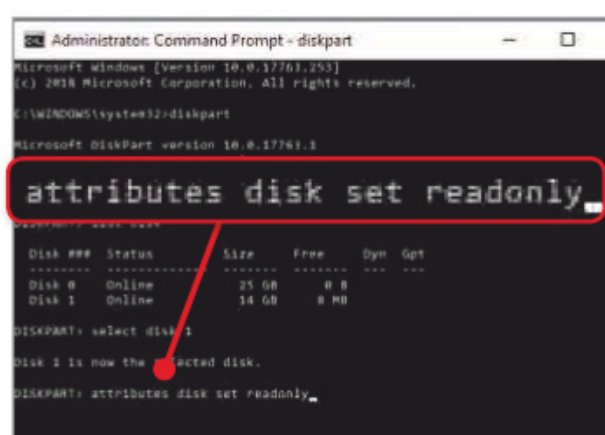
MANAGE YOUR FILES BETTER

10 Write-protect your USB drive

No minimum USB size

If you have essential files stored on a USB stick that you don't want anyone to change or delete, use write protection to safeguard them. There are a couple of ways to do this, but we're going to use a built-in Windows tool called Diskpart. This is basically the digital equivalent of popping out the tabs on the top of an old audio or VHS cassette.

Click Start, type `cmd`, then right-click



Safeguard the contents of your USB stick by write-protecting it

the Command Prompt option and select 'Run as administrator'. In the window that opens, type `diskpart`, press Enter, type `list disk`, then press Enter again. You'll see a list of drives attached to your PC. Look for your USB stick here – you'll spot it by the capacity listed under Size. Type `select disk X` (where 'X' is the number of your drive) then press Enter. Be careful here – you don't want to accidentally write-protect your system drive. When you're certain you've selected the correct drive, type `attributes disk set readonly` (see screenshot), then press Enter.

You'll now find that you're not able to add, remove or edit files on your USB stick. To undo your changes, repeat the process above but, once you've selected your disk, type `attributes disk clear readonly`, then press Enter.

11 Create and fix partitions

Minimum USB size 512MB

Another potentially lifesaving USB tool is a bootable partition manager. With one of

these on standby, you can try to recover data or securely erase your hard drive, as well as create, resize, clone and move partitions independently of Windows.

Our favourite partition manager is Parted Magic (partedmagic.com), which includes extras such as a virus scanner. It's no longer free, however, with licences costing £8.40. If you'd prefer a free equivalent, we'd recommend going with Gparted – download the ISO from www.snipca.com/30932, then install it to a spare 512MB-plus USB stick (using tip 12 below). To access all Gparted's partitioning tools, start up your PC with the stick plugged in and select 'Gparted Live (Default settings)' in the menu screen.

12 Burn any ISO to USB

Minimum USB size depends on ISO size

Many of our tips here involve transferring ISO files to a USB stick and – as we've explained – it isn't as simple as just dragging and dropping them on to your external drive. ISO files are structured in

a very specific way, because they're usually intended to be burned to a CD or DVD. But, using a tool called Rufus, you can 'burn' any ISO file to a USB stick instead. You could use it to create the bootable Gparted stick mentioned in tip 11, for example, or even create a virtual DVD on a USB stick.

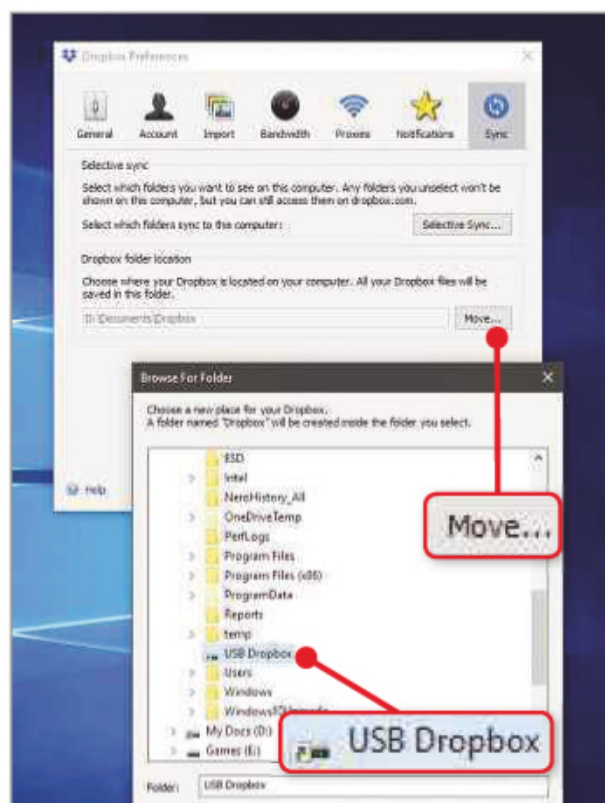
Rufus is easy to use, too. Get it from <https://rufus.ie> – there's even a portable version you could add to your toolkit of portable apps. Run the tool and select your USB stick in the Device menu at the top, then click Select and browse for the ISO you want to burn to your drive. Under format options, you can choose a name for your drive, then click Start.

13 Move Dropbox to a USB stick

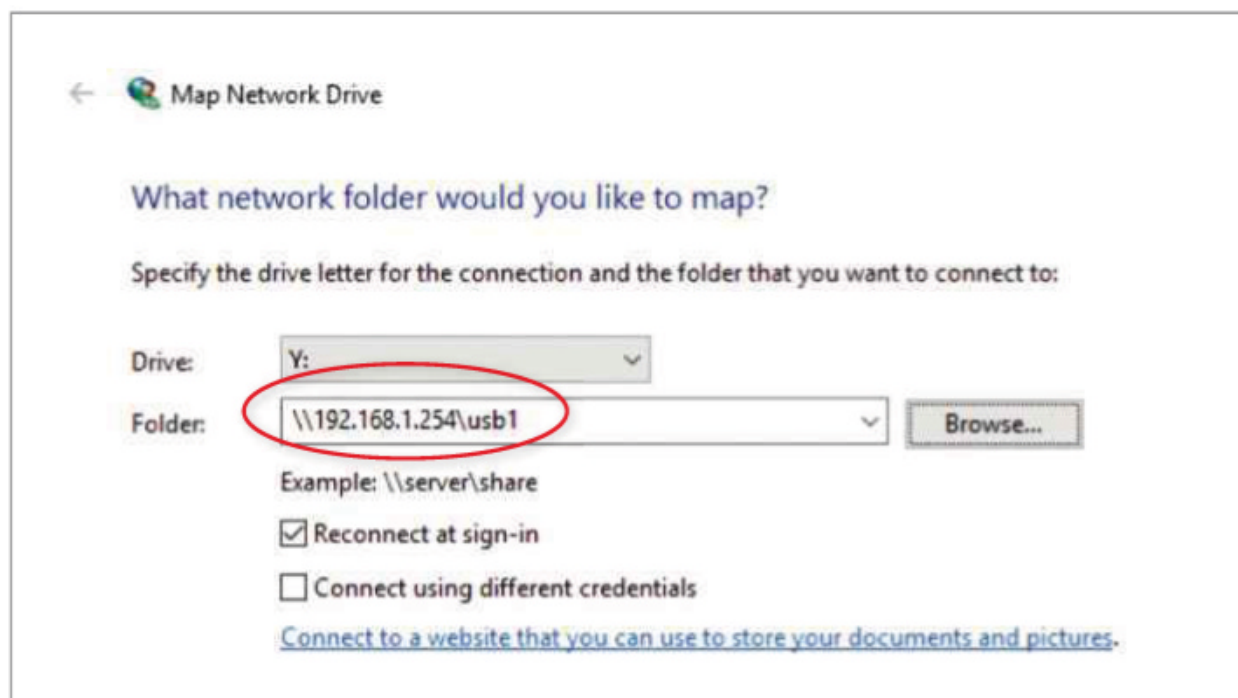
No minimum USB size

The free version of Dropbox just got a whole lot less useful – as of March this year, free Dropbox users are limited to using the service on just *three* devices. If you're already over that limit, Dropbox won't unlink any of your existing devices, but you'll need to pay £7.99 per month if you want to add any more. Sadly, there's nothing we can do about that. But there is another Dropbox annoyance that we definitely can help you out with.

By default, the Dropbox desktop syncing tool won't let you move your Dropbox folder to a USB stick. Try it and you'll see an error message saying you can't use removable drives. But offloading your Dropbox folder on to a spare USB stick can be particularly handy if you're using it on devices with limited storage, such as Windows tablets.



Once you've mounted your USB stick as a new folder, tell Dropbox where to find it



Type the IP address of your router and your USB stick's name to create a shortcut to it from your computer

To do it, you'll need to use a small hack to trick the Dropbox tool into thinking it's moving your folder to a non-removable drive. Plug in your USB stick, then right-click Start and select Disk Management. Locate your USB stick here, then right-click it and select 'Change drive letter and paths'. Click Add in the window that opens, select 'Mount in the following empty NTFS folder', then click Browse. In the next window, select the C drive, click New Folder, then name the new folder USB Dropbox. Click OK twice to apply your changes.

Next, right-click the Dropbox icon in your notification area and select Preferences. Click the Sync tab, then click Move under 'Dropbox folder location' and browse for the 'C:\USB Dropbox' folder you created (see screenshot below left). Click OK and your files will be moved to the USB stick.

14 Make use of your router's USB port

No minimum USB size

Does your router have a USB port? If so, there's a good chance you can insert a USB stick and share it across your home network. Setting this up is usually just a case of plugging in the stick. However, in some cases, you may need to log into your router's configuration tool to enable drive storage or file sharing – how you do this varies from router to router, so check your model's instructions.

Next, you need to 'map' the stick as a network drive in Windows. Again, the precise process varies, depending on your router. But with a BT Home

Hub, for example, open a File Explorer window, click This PC and click Computer, then 'Map a network drive'. In the folder box, type your router's **IP address**, followed by a usb drive name – for example, `\\192.168.1.254\usb1`. Make sure the 'Reconnect at sign-in' box is ticked, then click Finish. From there, you'll be able to treat the shared USB stick like any other drive, adding and deleting files as needed.

15 Expand your phone's storage

No minimum USB size

If you're running out of storage on your phone, your old USB sticks can come to the rescue. Connecting a USB stick to your mobile device isn't as easy as just plugging it in, though. Most devices don't have full-blown USB ports, but many tablets and phones support a technology called USB On-The-Go (OTG). All you need is an OTG cable – such as this £7 Anker cable on Amazon www.snipca.com/30989 (pictured below). Before you buy, check that your device is compatible with OTG.

Apple owners are out of luck – iPhones and iPads don't support OTG at all. For Android devices, either refer to your manufacturer or use an OTG checker app, such as USB OTG Checker (www.snipca.com/30958) to see if your phone or tablet supports external drives.



If your phone supports USB OTG, you can use a cable such as this to connect a USB stick



GET CREATIVE WITH YOUR USB STICKS

16 Make a portable photo slideshow

Minimum USB size 128MB

Put that USB port on your TV to good use by creating photo slideshows that you can play directly from a USB stick. We recommend a free tool called PhotoFilmStrip (www.snipca.com/30990), which lets you turn a selection of photos into an HD-quality slideshow file that should play on pretty much any TV with a USB port.

Launch PhotoFilmStrip and click the folder icon with a plus sign, then give your slideshow a name, select your USB stick under Folder and leave the 'Aspect ratio' as 16:9. Open File Explorer and navigate to your Pictures folder, then drag and drop the photos you want to include on to the PhotoFilmStrip window. You can reorder the photos using the timeline strip at the bottom of the window and add more photos by dragging them from File Explorer to here.

There are tools for rotating and cropping your photos, as well as creating transitions. Click the music icon in the top toolbar to add a soundtrack. Once you've finished, click the filmstrip icon. Select 'x264/AC3 (MKV)' in the Format dropdown menu and 'FULL-HD (1920x1080)' in the Profile menu – these settings should give you the best compatibility and quality, but you may need to tinker with these options if the file won't play on your TV. Click Start and the slideshow will be saved to your USB stick.

17 Create a Freeview PVR

Minimum USB size 1GB

The trouble with most PVRs is that they don't let you do a lot with your TV recordings, beyond watching and deleting them. But by creating a PVR that uses a USB stick as its storage device, you can transfer your recordings to a PC, where you can edit them, stream to other devices and more. You'll need to buy hardware for this – specifically an August DVB415 (£35 from Amazon, www.snipca.com).



With a USB stick the DVB415 lets you record and share TV shows

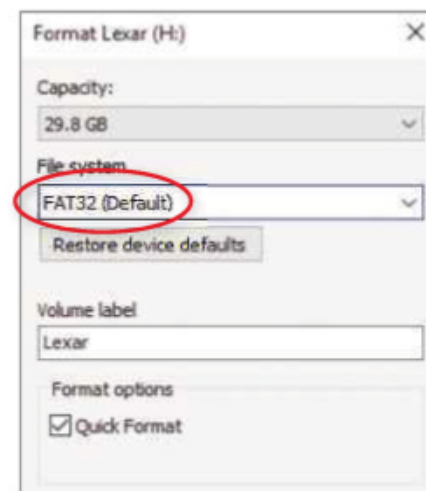
(www.snipca.com/30974 – pictured above). This is a fairly basic Freeview PVR – it has an HDMI output, Scart socket and a feed-through for the aerial connection. There's no built-in storage, but that's where your USB stick comes in. Crucially, the DVB415 doesn't add any DRM protection to its recordings, so you can unplug the USB stick, then plug it into your PC to transfer the video files to your hard drive.

18 Play your favourite music in your car

No minimum USB size

Most cars made in the last five years have one or more USB ports tucked away somewhere (usually in the glovebox or central armrest). By copying MP3 files to an old USB stick and inserting it into one of these ports, you'll be able to listen to your favourite music while driving. Choose a USB stick that's as physically small as possible – this reduces the risk of damaging it or your car's USB port with an accidental knock.

If your car doesn't detect your music files, you may need to format your stick as FAT32 instead of NTFS. To do this, right-click the USB drive in File Explorer, select Format, choose 'FAT32 (Default)' (see screenshot above right), then click Start. Bear in mind this will delete all files on the stick. If you've put a lot of files on your stick, it may take a while for your car to index the files the first time you insert it.



If your car can't detect your music files, re-format your USB stick as FAT32


19 Create an instruction manual archive

Minimum USB size 64MB

Most manufacturers provide digital instruction manuals in PDF format. Everything from your TV to your toaster – even your car – will have a PDF manual somewhere. Your first port of call should be your device manufacturer's website. Instruction manuals are usually found in the Support section. If you can't find it, there are other places that may have a copy you can download. Try searching for your product at www.manualslib.com, for example. Once you have them all, transfer them to your USB stick and keep it somewhere safe.

20 Give someone a curated USB mixtape

Minimum USB size 128MB

Emailing a Spotify playlist to a loved one just isn't the same as mixtape cassettes from yesteryear. To create a USB mixtape, first copy the MP3 music files to a USB stick using File Explorer. Next, make them play in order by numbering them – for example, '01 Love Is Here to Stay – Tony Bennett', '02 But Not for Me – Diana Krall' and so on. For added retro feel, you could buy a USB stick in the shape of an old cassette (£20 for 1GB from Amazon, www.snipca.com/30985), or follow the instructions in the YouTube video at www.snipca.com/30986 to convert an old cassette into a USB stick yourself. 

NEXT ISSUE On sale Wednesday 10 April

STREAM ANYTHING TO YOUR TV

Not just videos, but music, podcasts, games & more!



PLUS

- Windows 10 April Update: what to use, what to ignore
- Never use passwords again! Time to trust fingerprints...

ONSALE
Weds
10
April

Subscribe to Computeractive at www.getcomputeractive.co.uk

SUBSCRIBE NOW!



Subscribe to **Computeractive** today and save on the single issue price.

Each issue of **Computeractive** will be delivered directly to your device each fortnight.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

▶ HOW TO SUBSCRIBE...

...on an iPad or iPhone

- STEP 1** Return to the **Computeractive** library
- STEP 2** Choose your subscription term and tap twice on the 'price' box
- STEP 3** Choose whether to create an optional **PixelMags** account
- STEP 4** Enter your **Apple ID password** to confirm



...on a Kindle Fire

Kindle Fire subscriptions come with a **FREE** one month trial.

- STEP 1** Tap '**Free Trial Subscription**' in the **Computeractive** library
- STEP 2** Chose your subscription term from the drop down menu on the popup that appears
- STEP 3** Tap '**Subscribe**'



...on an Android device

- STEP 1** Open the Google Play Store **homepage** and navigate to the **Newsstand** section using the tabs at the top
- STEP 2** Search for **Computeractive** using the search icon in the top right of the screen
- STEP 3** Click the '**Subscribe**' button and pick your term
- STEP 4** Enter your **Google password** to confirm



...via the Zinio app

- STEP 1** Search for **Computeractive** via the search box in the **Shop** tab
- STEP 2** Tap the '**Subscribe**' button
- STEP 3** Choose whether to create an optional **Zinio** account
- STEP 4** Enter your **Apple ID password** to confirm



**Subscribe to *Computeractive* today
and save on the single issue price**

How safe is your old software?

Programs that are no longer supported won't receive any more security updates, but does that mean you *must* stop using them?

Will Stapley considers the evidence and gives his verdict



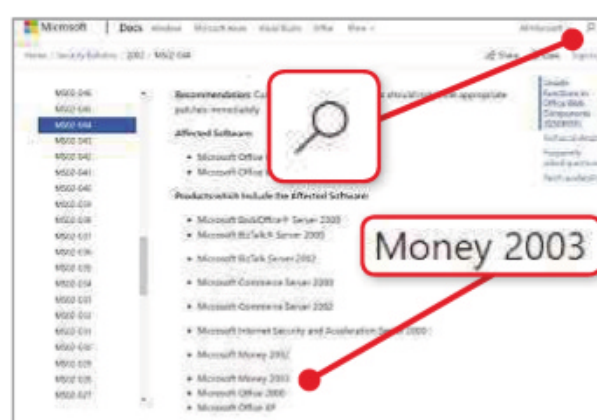
No software is completely safe. Even if you're running the latest programs and have up-to-date antivirus protection, you can still be vulnerable to security flaws that hackers discover before the software developers do.

If you're using software that's been discontinued by the developer and is therefore no longer receiving any updates, it's only ever going to get more unsafe as the years go by. Exactly how unsafe depends on the type of program and how you use it.

Here, we give our verdict on eight popular old programs and operating systems, but if you're running another one, there are a few things you can do to check how safe it is.

Run a search for the software on CVE Details (www.cvedetails.com), which lists all known security flaws for a wide range of software – each flaw is given a rating of 1 to 10 based on how severe it is (10 being the highest). Additionally, for Microsoft products go to www.snipca.com/30891 and run a search (top-right corner) for the name of your software followed by 'bulletin'. For example, searching for **Money bulletin** shows all security bulletins for Microsoft Money (see screenshot above).

While the security flaws highlighted by these sites will most likely be ancient ones that have since been fixed, if there are lots of them the chances of new flaws appearing is high.



Search for security notices for your old Microsoft software, such as Money

Windows XP

Support ended for XP five years ago, but research firm Statista says it's still used on just under five per cent of desktops worldwide (www.snipca.com/30892). For hackers, that's a huge opportunity: an operating system used by millions of people that's no longer has security updates.

Although security software will help detect infected files you download, it won't protect you from hackers finding new flaws buried in the operating system. You can limit risks by not connecting your XP computer to the internet, but that might not be practical. Or you could run it on a **virtual PC** using software such as VirtualBox (www.virtualbox.org). It's not ideal, though, and as much as we love XP, we simply can't recommend using it.

VERDICT: Unsafe

Windows 7

Microsoft might still be supporting Windows 7, but in 2017 it lambasted the

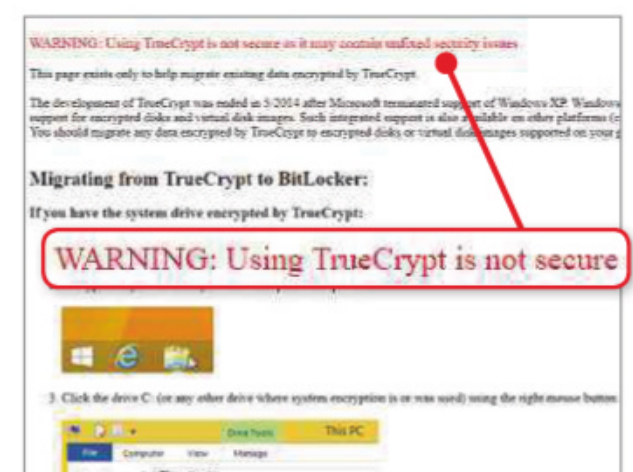
operating system as being outdated and unsafe (read the article at www.snipca.com/30893). However, this was an alarmist attempt to persuade people to upgrade to Windows 10. Make no mistake: Windows 7 is still supported and receiving regular security updates, and will continue to do so until its end of life on January 14, 2020. But as with Windows XP, when that date comes we wouldn't recommend anyone continues using Windows 7.

VERDICT: Safe, but end of life is fast approaching

TrueCrypt

The reason why TrueCrypt's developers discontinued the encryption tool is a mystery. Some believe it was in reaction to the FBI discovering a secret method to bypass the program's encryption, known as a 'backdoor'.

Regardless, all updates (including security patches) ended abruptly in 2014



The stark warning on TrueCrypt's site leaves you in no doubt about its security flaws

(see screenshot below left). Although we're not aware of any specific attacks since then, there's little reason to carry on using TrueCrypt.

Similar in name and design, VeraCrypt (www.veracrypt.fr) does everything TrueCrypt did – plus, it's fully supported and has regular updates.

VERDICT: Unsafe

Picasa

Google delighted many by buying image cataloguing and editing software Picasa in 2004 and immediately making it free to download. But it turned sour in 2016 when Google gave users just one month's notice that all support was to end, pushing people towards its web-based Google Photos service instead.

That hasn't stopped people using it. Picasa still works (albeit without the web album tool) and as we explain in this issue's Grow Your Family Tree (page 16), you can still download it.

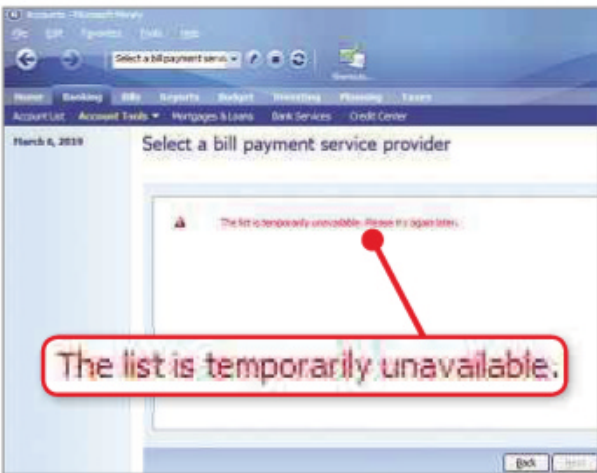
Before it was discontinued, some serious security flaws were found in Picasa, letting hackers use viruses to meddle with your PC without you knowing (www.snipca.com/30896). As with many flaws, you would have to download and open a malicious image file to be affected by this. Since Picasa is no longer supported, similar flaws could be uncovered (and not be fixed) in future, so it's a reminder to only open files if you trust where they came from.

VERDICT: Safe, but take care what files you open

Microsoft Money

Its interface is quirky and dated, but we know from your emails that many of you still enjoy using Microsoft Money. A year after discontinuing it in 2009, Microsoft released what it called the Sunset Edition (www.snipca.com/30895).

This free download lacks the web tools of previous versions (such as the ability to access online account information



Money's web services have permanently gone, so Microsoft should update this message

Developers' support terms deciphered

Deprecated / Obsolete
Software that is no longer in development. It may be removed or discontinued in the near future, but should still be safe to use until that time. Microsoft describes the Windows programs Paint and Snipping Tool as deprecated.

Extended Support
Used by Microsoft to describe software that won't receive any new features, but will get security updates. For example,

Windows 7's five-year Extended Support phase will end on January 14, 2020, at which point all security updates will cease.

Discontinued / End of Life / Unsupported
Software that is no longer receiving any updates – security or otherwise. This software may continue to work normally, but any security flaws that are discovered won't be fixed and may not even be reported.

and live share prices), but it allows you to update existing accounts, and create new ones.

Given that this version is offline only, risks from new security threats are limited, and nearly 10 years on from its demise we're yet to see a better free alternative for personal accounting.

VERDICT: Safe

Internet Explorer

No matter which browser you choose, we always recommend upgrading to the latest version. A secure browser is your first line of defence online, and using an outdated version leaves you vulnerable.

But while Chrome, Firefox and Edge get regular security fixes, as well as new tools to keep you safe (such as Chrome's warnings when you visit a site it's flagged as suspicious), Internet Explorer (IE) gets far less attention.

Even the latest version (IE 11) is seemingly despised by Microsoft. In a damning blog post last month titled 'The perils of using Internet Explorer' (www.snipca.com/30898), Microsoft labelled IE nothing more than a "compatibility solution" and said that it's not carrying out any work on it to support new web standards.

IE 11 is still receiving security updates, so we can't categorically label it as 'unsafe', but any version earlier than 11 is definitely a security risk and should be upgraded immediately. If you're not sure which version of IE you're using, click the cog button (top right), then About Internet Explorer.

You can download version 11 from www.snipca.com/30900, but we'd recommend ditching it in favour of better-supported alternatives, such as Chrome, Firefox or Edge.

VERDICT: Safe, but there are alternatives that offer better protection



Movie Maker has some past high-risk vulnerabilities listed on CVE Details

Windows Movie Maker

Loved for its simple video-editing tools, Windows Movie Maker was discontinued by Microsoft in 2017.

Although we're not aware of recent vulnerabilities, previous versions of Movie Maker were found to contain serious remote execution flaws similar to those in Picasa (as shown by the three critical flaws rated 9.3 on CVE Details – see screenshot above). While we're happy to class Windows Movie Maker as safe when creating or viewing your own movies, we suggest you don't use it to open files from untrusted sources.

VERDICT: Safe, but take care opening files

Lotus SmartSuite

Support for all versions of SmartSuite ended in 2014, but the once-popular office suite still runs, even in Windows 10. If you're careful how you use it you can limit any risks – such as only opening files you've created or those that come from a trusted source. But with free and fully supported alternatives (such as LibreOffice – www.libreoffice.org), there's little reason to carry on using it.

VERDICT: Safe, but we recommend replacing with a free alternative

Stop Paying Twice for the same service

The extras offered by ISPs and mobile-phone providers can save you hundreds of pounds, but they're often hidden away. **Will Stapley** uncovers free security software, premium TV services and much more



BT



All BT Broadband packages come with the company's free Virus Protect security software, which is a rebranded McAfee suite. If you have one of BT's Essential or Fibre packages, you can install the software on up to two devices (Windows PCs, Macs, Android and iOS phones and tablets); Fibre 2 and Fibre Plus customers can install the software on up to 15 devices.

Virus Protect will remain active for as long as you're a BT Broadband customer. Additionally, you get McAfee TrueKey password manager on up to five devices, which would otherwise cost £19.99 per year each. Non-BT customers should consider LastPass (www.lastpass.com) – a free alternative that works on an unlimited number of devices.

Depending on which package you have, you also get between 10GB and 1,000GB

of online storage. To see how much storage comes with your package and to download Virus Protect – log into your BT account at www.snipca.com/30959, select My BT at the top, then 'Inclusive extras' (see screenshot below left).

If you have a BT mobile-phone contract with at least 6GB of monthly data allowance, the BT Sport app is included for free, which provides access to all BT Sport channels, as well as ESPN. If you struggle to follow the action on a smaller screen, however, you will also need BT Broadband to stream from your phone to a TV. Download the BT Sport app from www.snipca.com/30960.

Sky



If you use Sky broadband, you can safeguard up to three PCs for free with McAfee Internet Security. Sky Broadband Unlimited and Fibre customers get a free one-year subscription, while Broadband Lite customers get three months (after which it costs £3 per month). To claim it, sign into your Sky account at www.snipca.com/30961, select 'Broadband and Talk', then scroll down and click McAfee Internet Security.

Last November, Sky made Netflix available on its Sky Q service with the new Ultimate On Demand package (£12 per month, also includes Sky Go Extra and Sky Box Sets). If you've already added this package, make sure you link it to your existing Netflix account, otherwise you'll be billed twice. You should receive

an email to link your Netflix account after signing up to Ultimate On Demand – if you don't, follow the instructions at www.sky.com/ActivateNetflix.

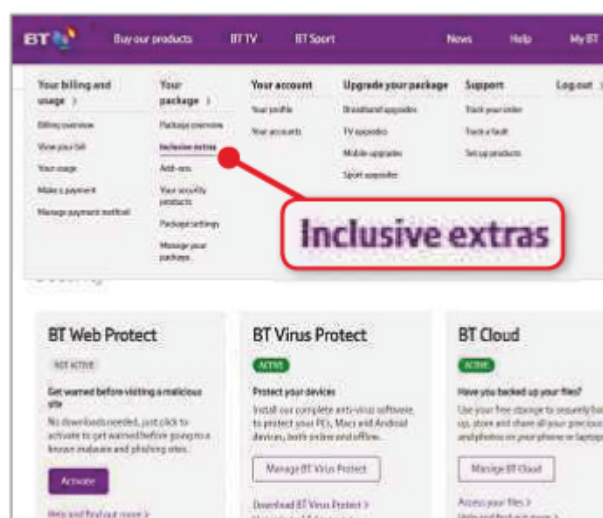
We've also read reports that customers have been double-billed for part of the first month after switching. Some customers received a full month's refund from Netflix as a goodwill gesture (see www.snipca.com/30962). If you've recently added Netflix to Sky Q, we recommend you check your statements to make sure you haven't been charged twice.

Virgin Media



All Virgin Media broadband customers get F-Secure SAFE, which includes antivirus, parental controls, a password manager and more. You can install it on up to five devices, but it's only free for one year, after which you can keep it for a discounted price of £25 per year. However, Virgin Media forums include complaints from unhappy customers about being charged the full £79.99 (see www.snipca.com/30963). It's worth contacting Virgin Media to confirm the renewal amount before it's due. To get F-Secure SAFE, follow the instructions at www.snipca.com/30964. This is available to Virgin Mobile customers too.


Virgin Media also offers 100 free Snapfish photo prints per month for a year, but it is withdrawing this on 31 March. If you're quick, you may still be able to register at www.snipca.com/30965 – the offer will last for the full



Access BT's free extras by logging into your BT account and clicking this option

12 months. It's limited to 6x4in prints and you'll need to pay delivery (£3.99), but it's a good saving on the usual price of £10 for 100 prints.


EE

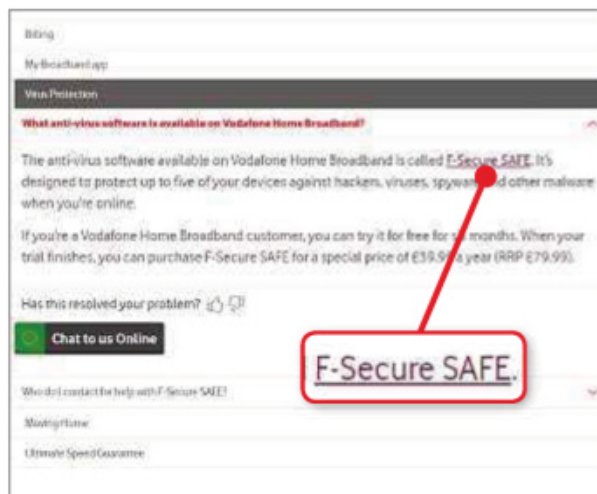
 EE broadband customers are eligible for Norton Internet Security Premium free for up to 10 devices for one year. A second year is half the normal price (£40), though the same discount is also available to anyone buying directly on Norton's website (www.snipca.com/30967). To install, go to (www.snipca.com/30968), then click 'Register and Download' at the bottom (this option will only be visible to EE broadband customers who have signed in).

EE mobile customers can get a free six-month trial of Apple Music. If you already have an Apple Music account, save £60 in subscription fees by cancelling your existing account, then sign up to EE's trial. When that expires, you can restart your original subscription. As long as you don't wait longer than 30 days, your downloaded music will be kept during the trial period. Text **Music** to 150 on your phone for instructions on how to activate the offer.

You can also get the BT Sports app for three months (usually £9 per month) by texting **SPORT** to 150. Just remember to cancel before the three months are up. And if you're already receiving BT Sport from BT, be sure to pause your subscription for the duration of the EE offer to avoid paying twice.

Vodafone

 Vodafone broadband packages come with F-Secure SAFE – a security suite that can be installed on up to five devices. It's only free for six months, though, after which you can keep it for £39.99 (half the standard price, but similar to other security suites). Follow the download link




Vodafone offers F-Secure SAFE security suite for up to five devices free for six months

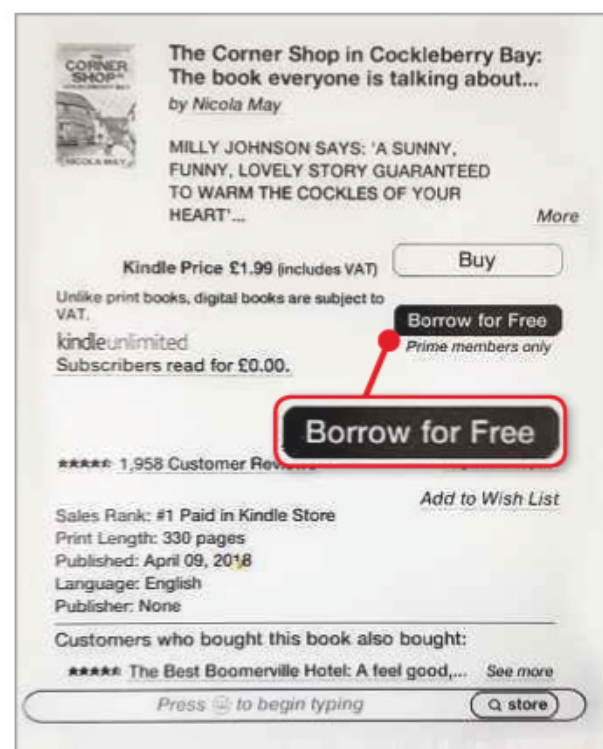
at www.snipca.com/30969 (see screenshot above). Oddly, you don't need to be a Vodafone customer to take advantage of this offer. We set up an account and got a free six-month licence (at no point did it say the offer was only for Vodafone customers).

If you have a Vodafone Red Entertainment mobile-phone plan, you can also get two years of one of the following: Spotify Premium, Now TV Entertainment, Sky Sports Mobile TV or Amazon Prime Video. You'll need to choose which service you want when you sign up to (or extend) your mobile contract, and you can't switch part-way through.

If you have a SIM-only contract, this offer applies for one year only. You should receive a text message letting you choose your package when you sign up to your Vodafone mobile contract – if not, text **Entertainment** to 97613.

Amazon Prime


 Along with free delivery of products and access to Prime Video, membership of Amazon Prime also includes unlimited online storage for your photos (plus 5GB for other files). But did you know you can also get the latest ebooks for free? As long as you have a Kindle reader or Fire tablet, you could borrow one book per month



No need to pay – get ebooks for free with the Kindle Owners' Lending Library



(keeping it as long as you like, but limited to one book at a time). To browse over 200,000 ebooks, go to your Kindle's menu, select 'Kindle store' or 'Shop in Kindle store', then Kindle Owners' Lending Library (see screenshot above). It's better value than than spending £7.99 per month on a Kindle Unlimited subscription.

TalkTalk

 Like Virgin Media and Vodafone, TalkTalk offers its broadband customers F-Secure software, albeit rebranded as SuperSafe. Its features are similar to Virgin's offering (see page 62), but is free for as long as you have a contract with TalkTalk. On the downside, you can only install it on one computer (for £2 per month you can get a licence for eight devices).

To get the offer, sign into your TalkTalk account at www.talktalk.co.uk/login, click 'My services' at the top, Manage SuperSafe Boost, then tick the 'Manage your security' box and click 'Confirm order'. You'll then receive an email with download and installation instructions.

Plusnet

 Plusnet's included extras are limited to security software, but it's a reasonable deal. If you have one of Plusnet's Extra broadband packages, you get Plusnet Protect (another McAfee spin-off), which can be installed on seven Windows PCs. It's only time-limited to three months if you're on the cheaper Unlimited Plusnet package, after which it costs £2 per month (around half the price of McAfee's Total Protect package). Get it from www.snipca.com/30970. 

Get a refund on security software & avoid loyalty tax

If you only discover your ISP is offering free internet security *after* you've paid for security software elsewhere, you may be able to secure a refund on the latter. McAfee, for example, will refund any purchase within 30 days. If you paid through an automatic renewal, this is extended to 60 days. Norton offers 60-day refunds on *all* purchases.

Be warned that those dreaded loyalty taxes are rife in the world of security software. So when you renew or reach the end of a free trial, never settle for the full amount you've been quoted. Check how much the same package is being offered to new customers, then refuse to pay more than this. Stick to your guns and you should be offered a better deal.

Problems Solved

Our experts solve all your tech problems

PROBLEM OF THE FORTNIGHT

Will my PC run a faster graphics card?

Q I have been reading your magazine since the very beginning. I like that it's for all-comers, with not too much jargon. I built a PC some years ago using an ASUS P8Z68-V LX motherboard (see screenshot right), with an ATI Radeon HD 5670 graphics card, 8GB of DDR3 memory and some SSDs. I'm thinking of building a new one, just for the hell of it. However, before I do I would like to know if there are any more legs in the old girl. Specifically, I am thinking of upgrading the graphics card, as I enjoy flight simulators. If I do that will I face any bottlenecks in the system? Any good general advice would be appreciated, as I am approaching silver-surfer status and the old grey matter needs a little encouragement!

Laurie Gutsell

A While there are very many factors that could influence the speed of a PC, and some that might warrant a new system, in your particular circumstances we're confident that a new graphics card would achieve what you want.

For a graphics card the only aspect of the computer likely to introduce a significant bottleneck is the PCI Express interface. The latest PCI Express (PCIe) standard is 3.0. At a



The ASUS P8Z68-V LX motherboard has one PCIe 2.0 x16 slot

theoretical top data-transfer speed of 1GB/s, it offers double PCI Express 2.0's 500MB/s bandwidth.

However, even parking the theoretical nature of these figures, it's not quite so simple as that. For starters, this bandwidth is per PCIe 'lane'. So, a PCIe 2.0 slot with 16 lanes (often written as 'PCIe 2.0 x16') will offer the same total bandwidth as a PCIe 3.0 x8 slot. Moreover, even today, few graphics cards – and the graphics demanded by the games they run – would ever come close to maxing out the total bandwidth available to a PCIe 2.0 x16 slot.

According to the manufacturer's specifications, at www.snipca.com/30815, your motherboard has one PCIe 2.0 x16 slot. We're guessing that's what your current graphics card is plugged into, and where any replacement card would go. Your current graphics card is now nearly a decade old, so we have little doubt that a more recent model would provide a significant graphics-performance boost – and you now know that the PCIe 2.0 x16 slot on your motherboard isn't likely to

“The physical size of many of today's most powerful graphics cards could be a problem”

be much of a bottleneck.

However, a bigger problem might be the physical size of some cards. On this matter we have to be more general. Many of today's most powerful graphics cards are sold as 1.5 or two-slot cards, like the pictured EVGA model (left, www.snipca.com/30848). This doesn't mean they require two slots, but that they're so fat they'll spill over the edge of your motherboard's PCIe 2.0 x16 slot, blocking access to at least one adjacent slot.

That might not be a problem if you don't need access to that blocked slot, but you can't assume your PC case will have the room to accommodate a modern graphics beast. So, before investing money on an expensive new card, break out the tape measure inside your PC's case.



The EVGA GeForce GTX 1080 is one of today's most powerful graphics cards

Why is my Facebook account freezing?

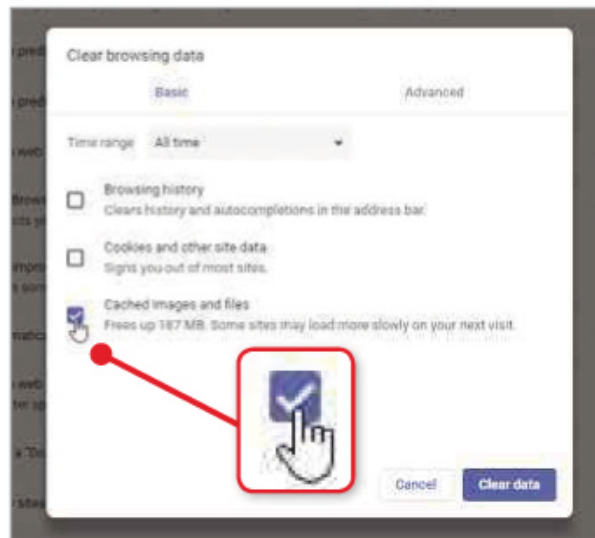
Q I have no idea what's happened, but all of a sudden Facebook seems to hate me. When I scroll down my feed it soon locks up, so I can go no further.

It used to be fine, but since around January this is now a daily experience. It's very frustrating, as you can imagine. I use Chrome incidentally, and no other websites seem to be affected. I don't remember it being a problem before the Windows 10 October Update, so perhaps that's to blame?

Anthony Hughes

A We doubt this has anything to do with the latest Windows 10 update. Instead, this is almost certainly down to something saved in your web browser's **cache**. The most likely culprit is an out-of-date **cookie**, or a corrupted image or video file.

Like many websites, Facebook relies on cached data to speed up its operation.



However, Facebook in particular loads content 'on demand' as you scroll. Some of this content will be drawn from the cached data stored on your computer's hard drive, so it'll work right up until it hits the bit of dodgy data that's causing it to freeze.

The solution is to reset the problematic data. That's easier said than done, of course, because it'd be almost impossible

If removing Facebook's cookies fails, try clearing your browsing data

to identify exactly which cookie or cached file is causing the problem.

In the first instance, log in to Facebook as normal. Now, in the address bar at the top, click the padlock icon next to the Facebook URL, followed by Cookies. In the 'Cookies in use' box, click to expand the Facebook category and then click to select Cookies. Now click Remove followed by Done.

Restart your browser and then visit Facebook, and sign in afresh. If the problem persists then try clearing the cache, as a corrupted media file might be the fundamental cause. To do this in Chrome, for example, click the menu button (three dots, top right), then point to 'More tools' and click 'Clear browsing data'. Now, in the Basic tab, tick 'Cached images and files' (see screenshot), then click 'Clear data'.

How do I delete all the files and programs on my PC?

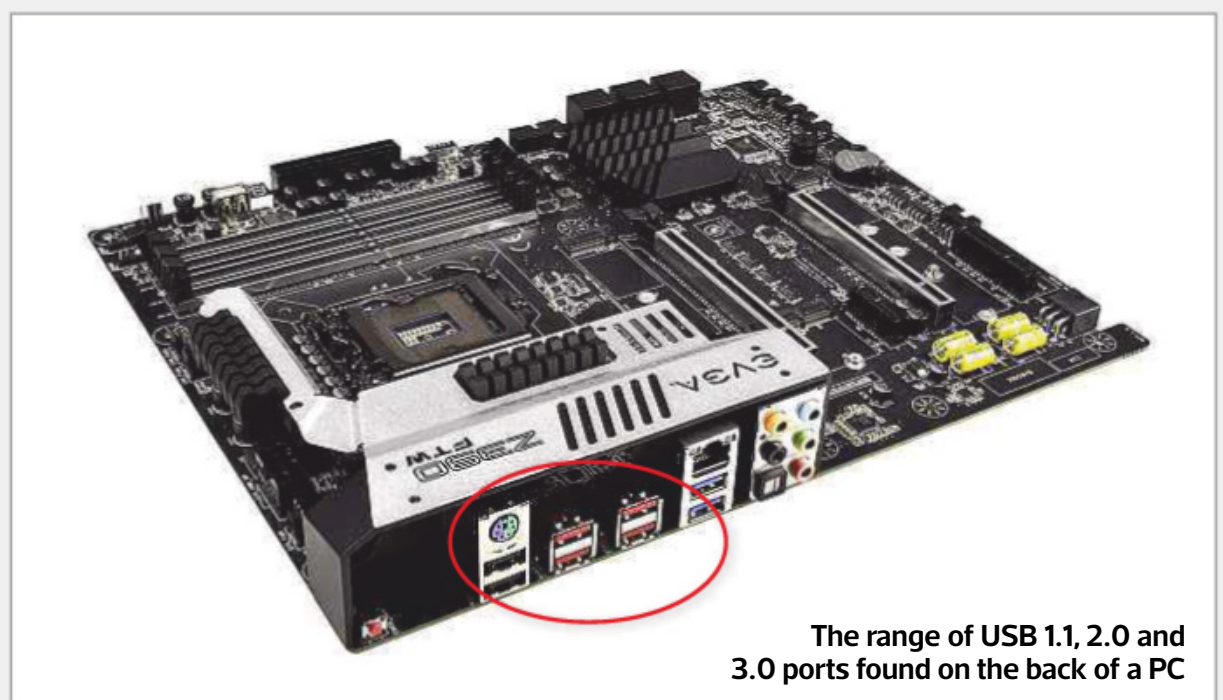
Q I've bought a new laptop and want to give away my old PC, so I need to remove all files and programs. I tried Windows 10's Reset option but it got stuck at the language screen, with the keyboard not working. I tried to create a recovery USB drive but the boot order does not allow booting from a USB drive. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Dave Allen

A The solution is likely a lot simpler than you might imagine. The crux at this stage is that your keyboard isn't working. Nor is the mouse, we'd guess.

This is because, at this point, Windows hasn't loaded the relevant **drivers** for the USB ports to which they're attached. If Windows could conclude loading, these drivers would initiate and then your keyboard and mouse would work just fine. It's a chicken-and-egg situation.

So what's the fix? Well, crane your



The range of USB 1.1, 2.0 and 3.0 ports found on the back of a PC

neck around the back of the PC and look at the USB ports. Chances are that your keyboard and/or mouse is plugged into a **USB 3.0** port. These typically have a blue plastic insert, but there's no absolute guarantee of the colour. It's unlikely drivers for these ports will load until Windows has fully launched.

Instead, plug the cables into a **USB 2.0** or even USB 1.1 port. These are usually coloured black, but again there's no guarantee. However, the point is that at least one of these ports should be active at the language screen – so just try each port in turn, restarting the PC after each swap.

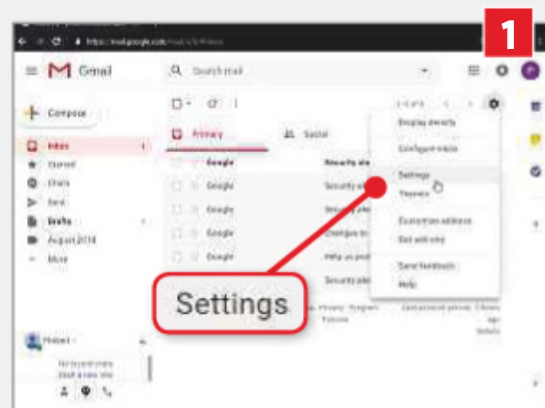
How do I hide Gmail folders?

Q I have two email addresses, one from Gmail and an old Hotmail (Outlook.com) identity. All I want to see at the side are the basics to keep me going, like the Inbox, Sent and Deleted folders. Hotmail gives me this but in my Gmail account I am confronted with a confusing array of items that put me off using it. Is there any way I can just get it to show what I need, and therefore use the program with ease?

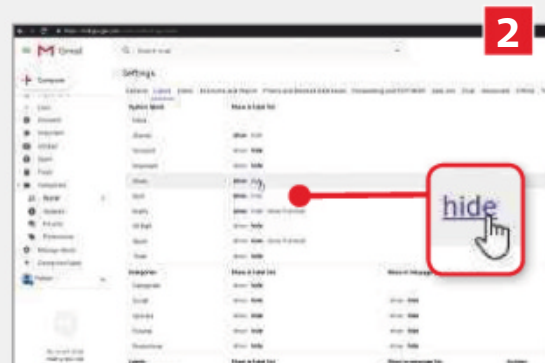
Duncan Bird

A Technically, Gmail doesn't sort mail into folders. Rather, it assigns each message one or more 'labels' that can be used to display, categorise or otherwise filter messages. The net result is the same as Outlook.com's folders, but there's no doubt Gmail's labels can be messy and confusing.

To take control, first click the Settings cog (top right) then click Settings (see screenshot 1). Next, near the top, click to select the Labels tab. Now just go through the list of labels, clicking the 'show' or 'hide' links (see screenshot 2) alongside each, as desired.



To start the process of sorting Gmail's labels, go to Settings



Under the Labels tab you can then choose to 'show' or 'hide' labels

How do I control my touchpad?

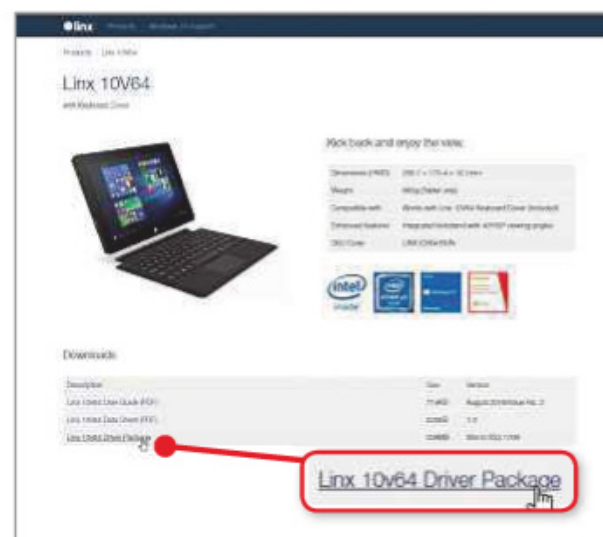
Q Whenever I move the pointer on my Linx Versare 10V64's touchpad, the screen changes size violently. This makes the machine more or less unusable. I read one way to deal with this is via the 'Additional mouse options' link in Settings, followed by a Pinch Zoom option. I found 'Additional mouse options' but clicking it just led to a Bing search. Can I install a third-party touchpad driver? The Linx website seems to want to download only spurious bits of software.

Chris Kennedy

A We don't think any third-party drivers exist for your device, so that idea is a nonstarter.

The Pinch Zoom option is part of a touchpad-specific box. We don't know why it'd be missing on your machine but another way to reach it is to press Windows key+R to summon a Run box, then type `main.cpl` and press Enter.

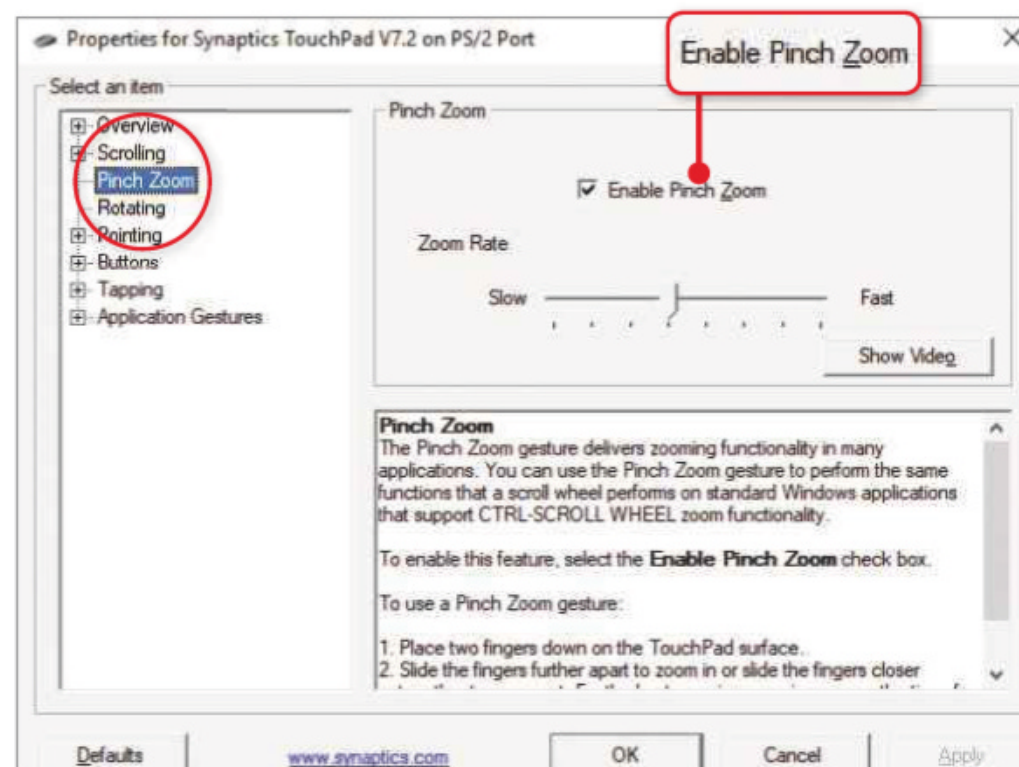
Now click Device Settings followed by Settings. This is the box for your specific touchpad. In the left-hand pane, look for the Pinch Zoom option (see screenshot



The official Linx website has a download link for the 'Linx 10v64 Driver Package'

below), then in the right-hand pane, untick the Enable Pinch Zoom box and click OK.

If you still can't reach this, download the latest drivers from the Linx website. You say you tried this but found only spurious links. We think you ended up at a fake or fan site, as the legitimate site has plenty of real drivers. The page for your exact model is www.snipca.com/30787 – just click the 'Linx 10v64 Driver Package' link (see screenshot above).



Clear the tick from the Enable Pinch Zoom box

Q: Why can't my wife log off?

A: Issue 523, page 67 – find it on our 2018 Back Issue CD

Buy it from
www.snipca.com/30307



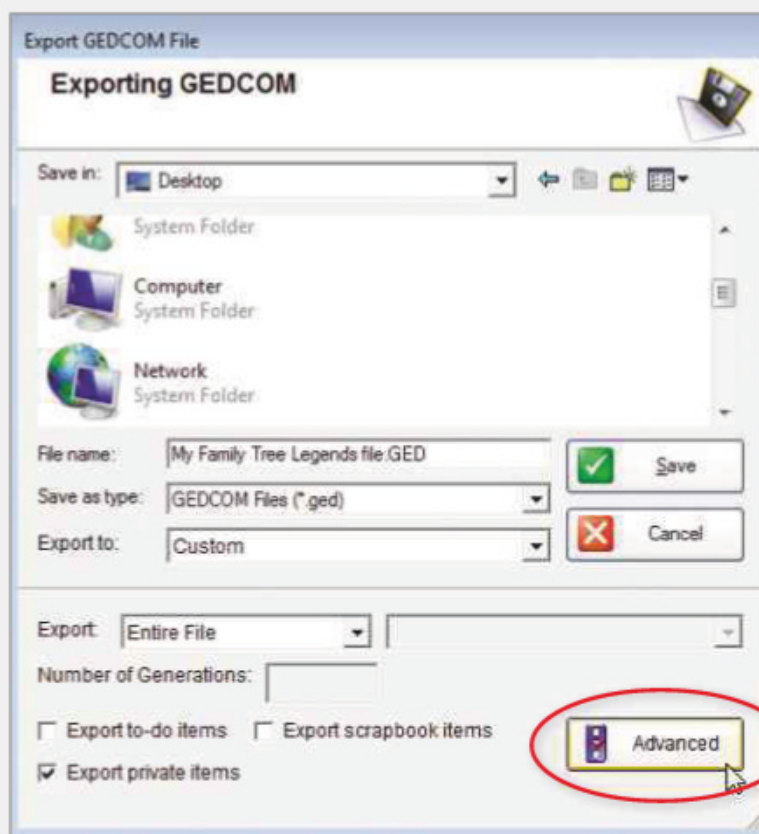
How do I open my old family tree?

Q Years ago I created a family tree using a program that I can't now recall. I mention this because I've recently stumbled on the file for that chart, on an old drive. It's called '2001Tree.ftl', which I guess gives an indication how old this is! I have literally no idea how I might open this nowadays. Windows 10 certainly doesn't want to know, just asking me how I want to open the file. Any ideas?

Graham Ross

A This file was almost certainly produced by a program called Family Tree Legends (FTL). This was originally made by a firm called Pearl Software, which was purchased by MyHeritage.com way back in 2007. The product has been discontinued but MyHeritage.com has made the last version available as a free download, from www.snipca.com/30629.

The bad news is that no matter what we tried we could not get FTL to work in Windows 10. Given the program's



When exporting your old family tree file to GEDCOM, click **Advanced** to ensure all the content you want is included

you could install FTL and export the contents to the Genealogical Data Communication, or GEDCOM, format that's supported by all modern genealogy tools and services.

Note when you install FTL you'll be asked to enter a serial number, which is displayed on the aforementioned download page. Now click Open, select your FTL file and click Open again. Wait for FTL to process the contents then click File followed by 'Export to GEDCOM File'.

obsolete status, there's no prospect of finding a fix.

However, it does work perfectly in Windows 7 (and XP for that matter). So, if you can beg, borrow or steal access to someone else's Windows 7 or XP PC, then

To ensure that everything you want to keep is exported, click the Advanced button (see screenshot), then tick all relevant boxes. Now click OK followed by Save.

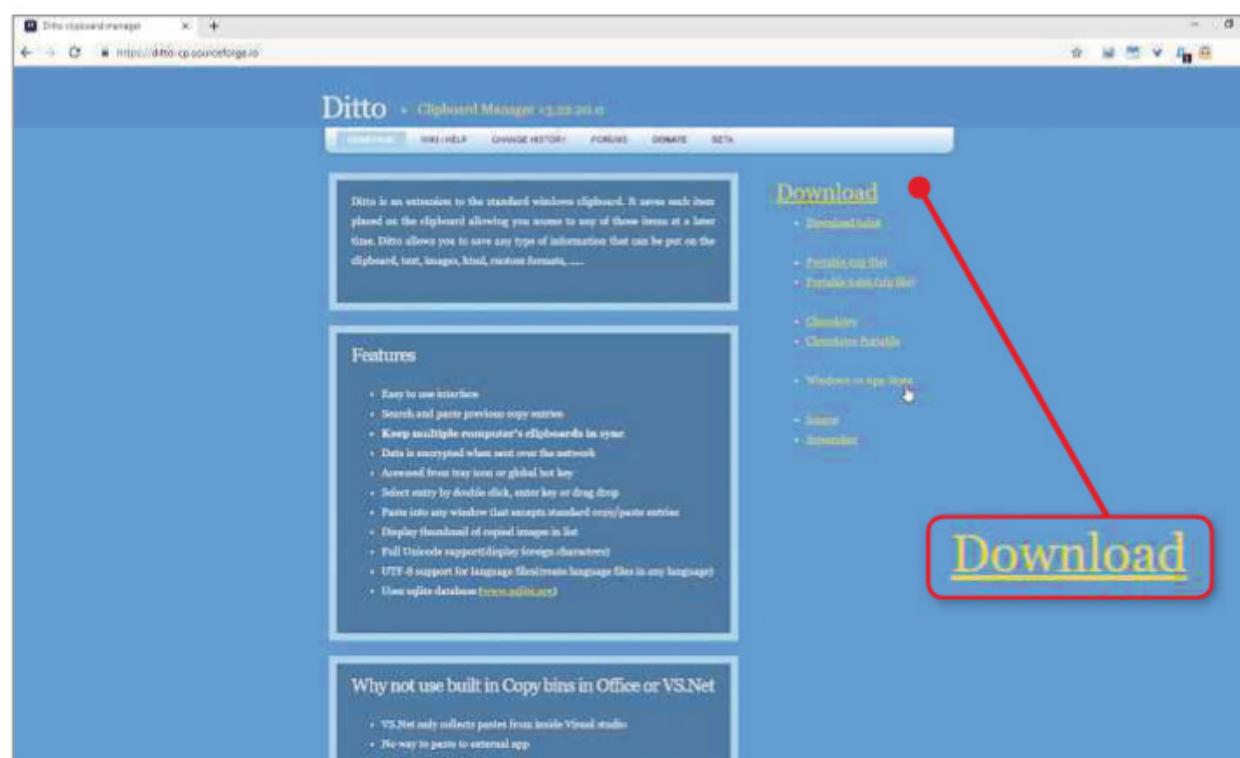
Why can't I run the Ditto clipboard?

Q I wanted to install the Ditto clipboard program, recommended by *Computeractive* in the past. However, my laptop won't run it. It claims to have a **64bit** processor but a **32bit** operating system. Is this the root of my problem?

Stephen Manistre

A Yes, the details you've supplied do point to a likely cause. We don't know why your laptop has a 32bit operating system, but it could be that the manufacturer decided that, even with a 64bit processor, the particular hardware setup wasn't fit for a 64bit edition of Windows. Actually, strictly speaking, we don't know for sure that it's running Windows, because you didn't say that, but obviously we assume that it is. If it isn't running Windows then that's the problem – Ditto is a Windows tool.

However, it's possible that you've downloaded the 64bit edition of Ditto.



Ditto's home page does not make it clear, but 'Download' is actually the link for the 32bit version

This won't run on a 32bit version of Windows. It's easy to do this because while the Ditto home page, at www.snipca.com/30783, does have a download link for the 32bit version, it's not obvious.

In fact, the download link for the 32bit edition is the word 'Download' – but this actually looks like a heading to the other

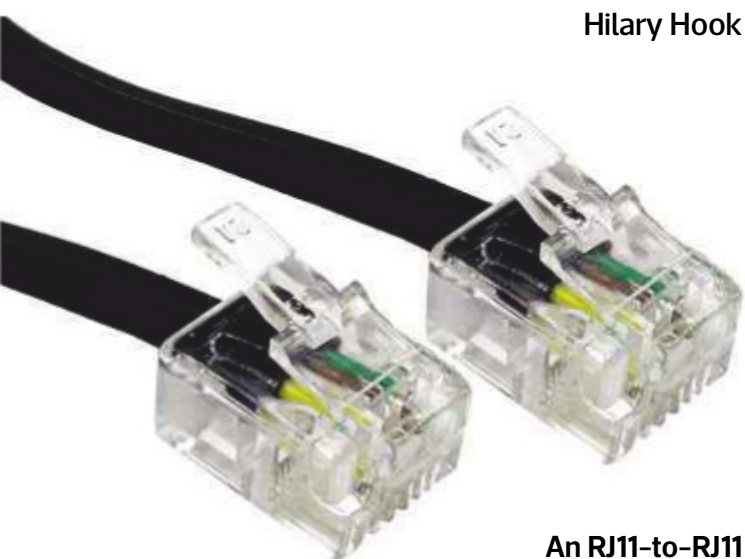
download links, the first two of which are for the 64bit edition. So, click this Download 'heading' instead (see screenshot). Alternatively, you can get the Windows 10 app version directly from the Microsoft Store, at www.snipca.com/30784. This works with either 32 or 64bit Windows versions.

Problems Solved

Is it safe to move my router closer to my BT socket?

Q Upstairs I have a Windows 10 desktop PC connected by cable to an adjacent router. There's another cable for the router, which runs through the floor to the BT socket downstairs. I run numerous devices, like iPads and iPhones, via Wi-Fi from this router. However, I want to move the PC downstairs, near the BT socket. I'm nervous about doing this, and I fear I might get things mixed up without help.

Hilary Hook



An RJ11-to-RJ11 cable will connect your router to your BT socket

A It sounds like someone else originally set this stuff up for you but, in essence, there's nothing much to worry about.

If you don't want to rip up carpets or floorboards to extract the cabling then you can simply buy a new RJ11-to-RJ11 cable – that's the one that goes from the router to your BT socket (or into the filter that's plugged into the socket, depending on the precise setup).

A 3m cable costs around £3 (pictured left, www.snipca.com/30797). Within a few minutes after powering up, the router should renegotiate its connection with your broadband provider and then you'll be back in business.

If the Ethernet cable from the PC to the router is under carpet, then those too are cheap: Amazon's own-brand 1.5m cable is less than a fiver (www.snipca.com/30799).

Alternatively, leave the router where it is and buy a Wi-Fi adapter for your desktop. The pictured Inmua model (right, around £14, www.snipca.com/30798)

The Inmua Wi-Fi dongle will ensure a good signal between your PC and router



com/30798) has an integrated aerial, which should ensure a good signal – even if your PC is buried under a desk. Your computer can then connect wirelessly, just like your other devices.

Where's my Chrome audio gone?

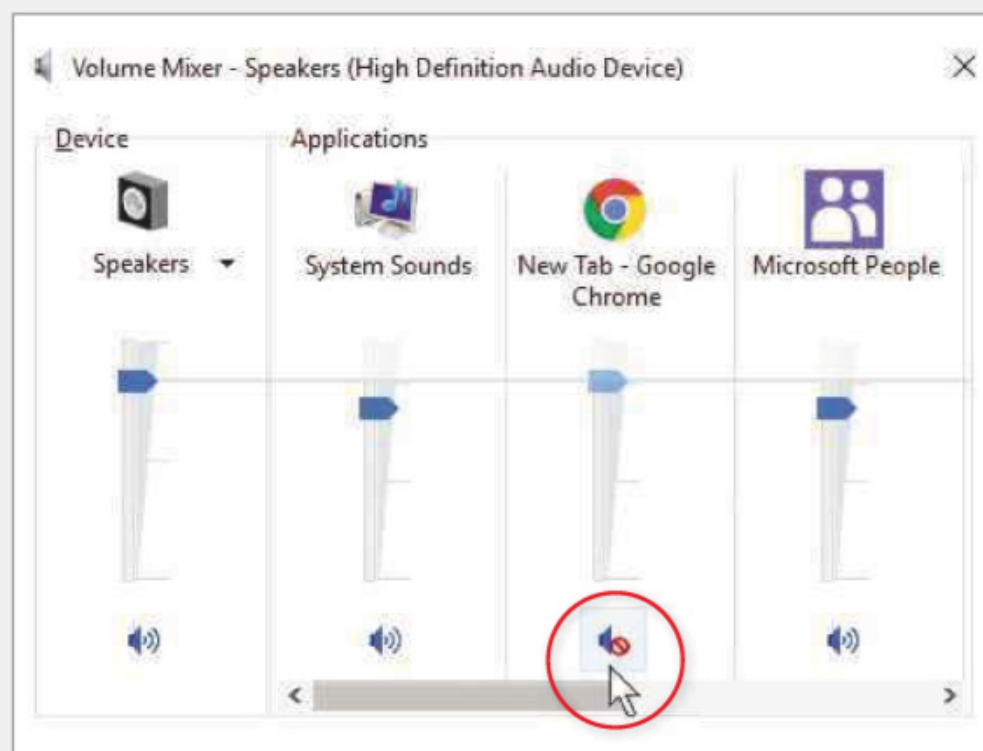
Q When I go on Google I cannot hear any sound at all. I have been on to the Google support page and tried all the suggestions to no avail. Are you aware of any way I can overcome this? I am using Windows 10 on a Dell Inspiron 3268. I can hear stuff in VLC, as well as in Edge and other browsers.

Penny Gorsuch

A From the rest of your question we think that by 'go on Google' you mean when you go online using Chrome, which is Google's web browser.

Regardless, the problem here is almost certainly that audio for Chrome has somehow been muted in Windows 10's Volume Mixer. We're not sure how that would've happened by accident but it's easy enough to remedy.

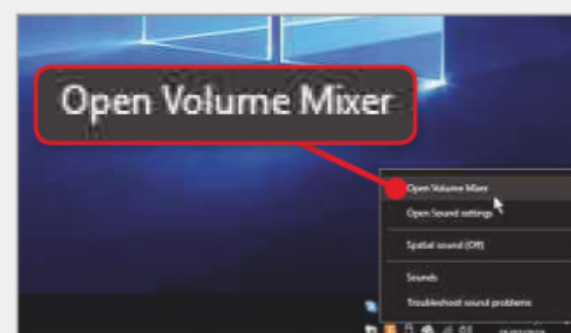
First, in the notification area at the far right-hand side of the taskbar, at the bottom of the screen, right-click the speaker icon, then choose Open Volume Mixer (see screenshot right).



In Volume Mixer you can click the 'stop' sign to unmute Chrome's volume

Right away you'll probably notice a little red 'stop' sign under Chrome's volume slider (see screenshot above). Click this to 'unmute' the app, or drag the slider itself to raise the volume to a specific level.

Right-click the speaker icon in the notification area and select Open Volume Mixer





WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN...

LibreOffice and OpenOffice?

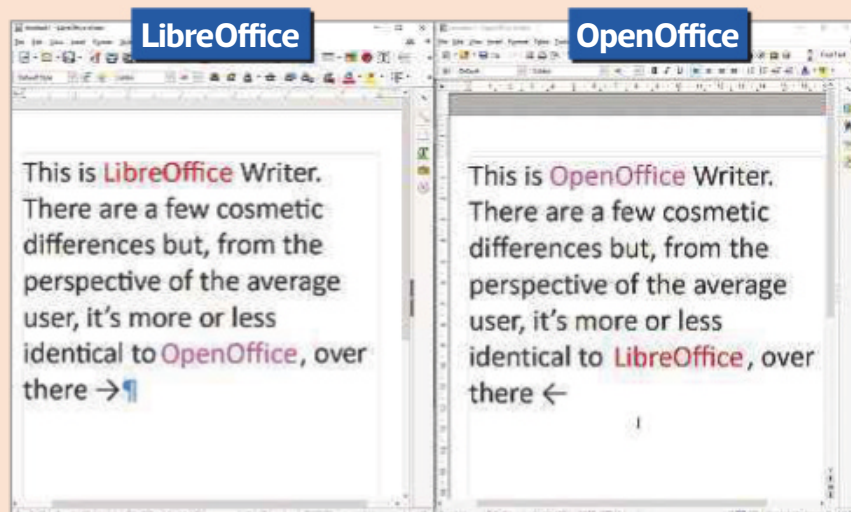
Q Having been forced to 'upgrade' to Windows 10, I am now without Microsoft Office. The new laptop came with Apache OpenOffice. However, I would like to know how this suite differs from LibreOffice, which seems to be mentioned much more frequently in *Computeractive*. Incidentally, I think you are the best computer magazine on the market! I don't expect this query to be printed but any advice would be very much appreciated.

Barry Simmons

A Thanks for the compliment. Hopefully, this answer will be a nice surprise!

We could actually summarise our answer by saying that, on the whole, there's really not a lot of difference between these two suites – but that wouldn't be very satisfying, would it?

First, we should say that both differ significantly from the paid-for market leader, Microsoft Office, in that they avoid its tabbed 'ribbon' interface. While some people swear by the



LibreOffice and OpenOffice are similar, both deriving from an old suite called StarOffice

one bunch of enthusiasts used the code to create LibreOffice. At the same time, others continued to develop OpenOffice. Both suites therefore share

ribbon, just as many besides prefer traditional dropdown menus – and neither OpenOffice nor LibreOffice disappoint in that respect.


The nub is that not so long ago the two tools were one and the same, both deriving from a suite called StarOffice, which was owned by Sun Microsystems. At the turn of the millennium, Sun gave up the battle with Microsoft Office and created OpenOffice – an **open-source** (ie, free) version of StarOffice.

While there have been lots of machinations since then, the bottom line is that, as the suite was open source,

the exact same heritage. However, over time, both will inevitably diverge in how they look and what features they offer.

So what should you do? Not worry about it, basically. We imagine in a decade one will emerge as the better suite but, right now, there's very little difference between the two.

Moreover, there's nothing at all to stop you installing both – so feel free to do that!

 Want to know the difference between technical terms? Email noproblem@computeractive.co.uk

Can I get LibreOffice Calc to work out my energy usage?

Q I have set up LibreOffice Calc to figure out my daily usage of gas and electricity. Assessing these figures over 12 months makes it easier to seek good deals on comparison websites. My problem is this: I cannot work out the formula for the number of days from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019, for example. We all know how many days there are in a year but applying that on a spreadsheet is proving difficult for me. I have to physically type '365' in my

sheet's Days column. I'd rather Calc's spreadsheet did this for me automatically. It would also allow for leap years. Please can you offer me a solution?

Patrick Elvin

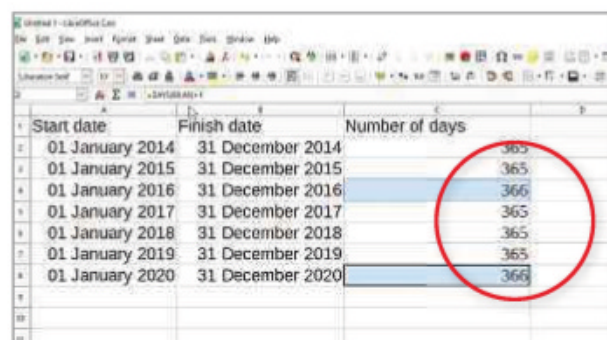
A This is one of those simple things that, while easy to implement, isn't obvious. You didn't tell us which if any formulae you've already tried, but the one you need is DAYS.

The basic syntax (or format) of this is `=DAYS("EndDate", "StartDate")`, where you replace EndDate and StartDate with the relevant dates. So, for example, to calculate the number of days between the 1 January and 31 December 2019, the full function would be `=DAYS("31/12/2019", "1/1/2019")`.

But there's a slight hitch. The result doesn't factor in the start date, so you either need to type the day before or have the formula add a day. So, using our

earlier example, the full string would be `=DAYS("31/12/2019", "1/1/2019")+1`.

Incidentally, if you're using cell references to dates then these do not need to be enclosed in double-quotes. So, the formula might read: `=DAYS(B1,A1)+1` – where cells A1 and B1 respectively contain the relevant start and end dates.



Start date	Finish date	Number of days
01 January 2014	31 December 2014	365
01 January 2015	31 December 2015	365
01 January 2016	31 December 2016	366
01 January 2017	31 December 2017	365
01 January 2018	31 December 2018	365
01 January 2019	31 December 2019	365
01 January 2020	31 December 2020	366

LibreOffice Calc's format for working out the day totals is `=DAYS("EndDate", "StartDate")`

Next Issue

ON SALE
Weds
10 Apr

- Why can't I view Windows on my TV?
- How do I stop Word crashing?
- How do I remove Chrome? ...And many more

Subscribe to Computeractive at www.getcomputeractive.co.uk

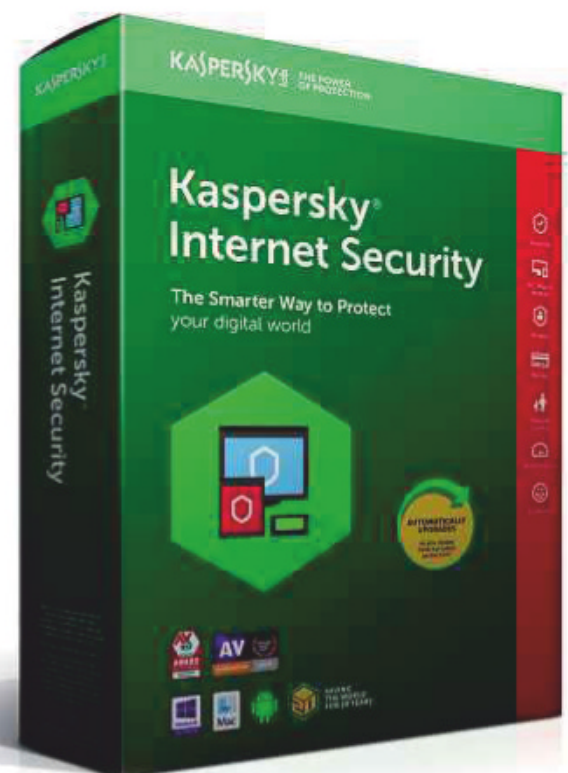
READER OFFER!**ADD ONE
YEAR
FOR JUST
£5**

Kaspersky Internet Security 2019

Kaspersky has now released the new and improved 2019 version of its multi-award-winning antivirus software. *Computeractive* readers can download it now at a specially discounted price

WHAT'S NEW IN KASPERSKY 2019

- ✓ Finds and removes dodgy browser extensions
- ✓ Identifies software that needs to be updated
- ✓ Gives you more control over which adverts are blocked
- ✓ More advanced options to keep malware off your PC



SINCE WINDOWS 10 LAUNCHED 20,562 COMPUTERACTIVE READERS HAVE BOUGHT KASPERSKY SOFTWARE FROM OUR SOFTWARE STORE

ONE PC for ONE year NOW ONLY £17.99* Normally £34.99

Buy it on our Software Store at www.snipca.com/21532

*Add another year for just £5

THREE PCs for TWO years NOW ONLY £34.99*

Normally £79.99

Buy it on our Software Store at www.snipca.com/21533

Winner of the past nine *Computeractive* antivirus tests



Reader Support

Having a problem with our recommended software or expert tips? Email editor@computeractive.co.uk and we'll do our best to help

How do I run Alfred?

Q As suggested in Issue 548's 'Beat the Burglars' feature (page 60) I decided to turn my old iPhone 3GS phone into a security camera. However, the recommended Alfred app (www.snipca.com/30573) doesn't appear to be compatible. My phone runs iOS 6.1.6, but Alfred requires iOS 8.0 or later. Is there a workaround, or must my old phone return to gathering dust?

John Watkin

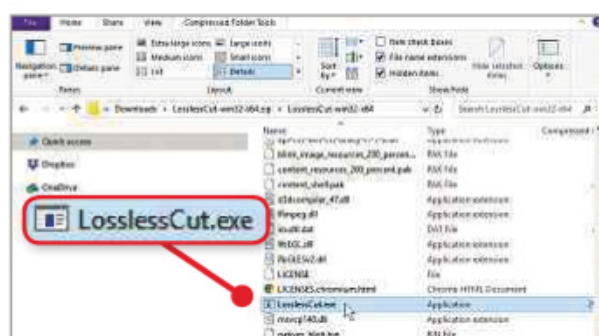
A Alfred is designed and marketed as a way to turn old smartphones into security cameras. However, it doesn't actually work with *really* old phones, so your confusion is understandable. There's no fix, unless Alfred's developer decides to support older versions of iOS, but that seems unlikely. As you say, Alfred requires an iPhone with at least iOS 8.0. The oldest iPhone to support that is the 4S, released in 2011. So, your 2009-vintage 3GS doesn't cut the mustard for Alfred, unfortunately.

However, there are other tools in the App Store that do a similar job and are compatible with iOS 6.0 and later, so *will* work with your phone. One such is Presence (www.snipca.com/30828). It's a free download and most aspects are also free to use or try, with in-app purchases to unlock some features (such as longer recordings and increased storage).

Why can't I see LosslessCut.exe?

Q There were some great articles in Issue 547, and so much to do! I downloaded the video editor mentioned in Best Free Software, on page 19, but I can't see the LosslessCut.exe tab to open the program. Once downloaded, all I saw was 'LosslessCut-win32-64.zip'. When I opened this folder there was a bewildering array of files displayed but no sign of a LosslessCut.exe. Can you tell me where I've gone wrong please?

Alan Templeton



Once you've revealed file extensions in your system, click this to launch LosslessCut

A We should say that 'LosslessCut-win32-64.zip' isn't – technically speaking – a 'folder'. Rather, it's a compressed file in ZIP format, which contains lots of other folders and files. However, File Explorer does let you navigate ZIP files as if they were normal folders, so the distinction often doesn't matter. Either way, LosslessCut.exe isn't a 'tab' but an **executable file** (EXE) that needs to be double-clicked to launch the program itself – and it's inside a folder contained within the 'LosslessCut-win32-64.zip' compressed file.

So, we think you've double-clicked the 'LosslessCut-win32-64.zip' and viewed it in File Explorer as a 'folder'. For this particular program, that's okay. However, for future reference, to 'expand' the contents of a ZIP file you normally right-click the file and then choose Extract All. Regardless, inside 'LosslessCut-win32-64.zip' is an actual folder, called 'LosslessCut-win32-64'. We additionally think you've double-clicked this in File Explorer. Again, for this particular program, which doesn't require installation, that's okay.

However, we think that your system is set up to hide the file extensions for known file types. This is the crux of the problem, because it means you can't instantly or obviously tell an EXE file from any other file type. To fix that, in File Explorer, first click the View tab (at the top). Now, on the right-hand side, click Options then 'Change folder and search options'. Next, in the Folder Options box that appears, click the View tab, then, under 'Advanced settings', clear

the tick from the 'Hide extensions for known file types' box. Click OK.

Finally, back in the 'LosslessCut-win32-64' folder you should see that all the files now have three-letter extensions, and you should therefore be able to pick out LosslessCut.exe (see screenshot left). Just double-click it to launch the program.

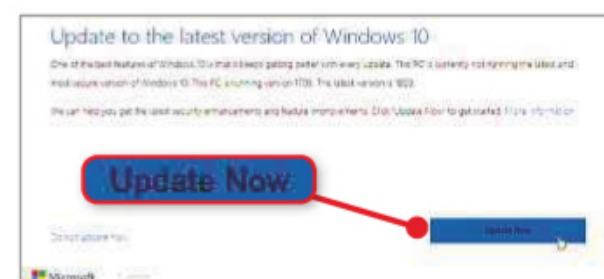
Why didn't you suggest WUA?

Q I look forward to each issue so keep up the good work. However, I must respond to the advice offered to Mike Boyle in Issue 547 (page 67), which appears to be incomplete. I had the same problem of not receiving the October Update (1809) by January, and used your advice from Issue 545's Reader Support page to use the Windows Update Assistant (WUA) to do the job. This was not offered as a solution to Mike and, in my opinion, left him with less-than-adequate advice. Could you address this in Reader Support?

Ian Watkins

A In our original reply we did make it clear that we believed that Mike's PC might contain some incompatible software or hardware resulting in a roll-out block by Microsoft. As such, 'brute-forcing' an installation of 1809 might not be the best idea – as any incompatibilities might cause problems.





However, your point is valid and perhaps we should have finished with a suggestion that Microsoft's free WUA tool could do the job, albeit possibly with some risk. So, if Mike wishes to try that, the tool is a free download from www.snipca.com/30843 (see screenshot below).



Use Windows Update Assistant to jump the queue for the latest version of Windows 10

Broadband Deals

Call **FREE** on 0800 542 4709 to switch your broadband today

	Provider	Package Name	Monthly Price	Contract Length	Broadband Speed	Allowance	First-year Cost*
1		TalkTalk: Fast Broadband	£17.00 (£27 after 12 months)	12 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	CHEAPEST £204.00
2		Sky: Broadband Unlimited	£18.00 (£30 after 18 months)	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited *	£216.00
3		First Utility: First Broadband	£18.99	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£227.88
4		Virgin Media: Player Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	£33.00 (£51 after 12 months)	12 months	54Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£396.00

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details
* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 11/3/2019

Ofcom
Broadband Genie's helpline is powered by Simplify Digital, the Ofcom-accredited switching service

In the next issue of our sister title Web User...

- **ACCESS BLOCKED WEBSITES (legally!)**
Stop ISPs restricting what you can see online
 - **FIX SECURITY FLAWS NOW**
Plug the holes companies are ignoring
 - **CAPTURE ANY SCREEN**
Take and share screenshots on any device
- PLUS**
- **DITCH WINDOWS FILE EXPLORER**
Best free alternatives for managing your files





NEW!
ONSALE NOW!

Buy the Web User 2018 Back Issue CD on Amazon at www.snipca.com/30358

Next issue on sale Weds 3 April
Subscribe to Web User at <http://subscribe.webuser.co.uk>

Jargon Buster

32bit/64bit A measure of how much data a PC can process at once. Most older computers are 32bit, more modern ones are 64bit.

3G/4G A set of technologies that delivers faster mobile broadband.

4K Video with a resolution of at least 3840x2160 pixels.

5G The next (fifth) generation of mobile networks, to eventually supersede 4G.

802.11ac A standard for wireless networks that allows for much higher transfer speeds than **802.11n**.

Add-in Microsoft's name for tools that can be added to Office software.

Add-on A program that adds extra features to your browser.

AMOLED Active-Matrix Organic Light-Emitting Diode. An alternative technology to LCD for creating flat-panel displays.

Bandwidth A measure of how much data can be transferred through a connection at one time.

Beta A version of software that's being tested.

BIOS Basic Input-Output System. Software built into every PC that connects the vital components.

Cabinet file Compressed files that store data related to Microsoft tools, such as Office.

Cache A temporary space for storing information.

Cookie A small text file stored on your computer by a website.

Crowdsourcing Obtaining ideas, information or money from a large group of people, usually online.

DDR3 A type of computer memory, newer than DDR but older and slower than DDR4.

Digital signature A block of scrambled data that can be used to verify the sender of an email.

dpi Dots per inch. A measure of printed image quality.

Drive caddy A hard-drive case you can place inside your laptop.

Driver A file that tells Windows how to work with an external device.

DRM Digital rights management. Software that limits the copying of a file.

E-ink Electrophoretic ink. A special type of ink used to display content in electronic devices.

Executable file A program file designed to run in Windows. Executable files have the file extension .exe.

FAT32 An old system used for formatting hard drives.

Firmware Basic software stored on hardware, such as a processor, to control its operation.

FTP File Transfer Protocol. A system for transferring files between computers.

Gesture Finger movements on a screen or trackpad that perform an action.

GHz Gigahertz. A measure of how many instructions a chip can process per second.

Gorilla glass Scratch-resistant glass that's used to protect the screens of tablets and phones.

Graphics card A component in a computer that produces the image shown on the monitor.

HDMI High-definition media interface. A type of connection that transmits high-definition video and audio signals.

Hotspot A public area covered by a Wi-Fi network that allows you to access the internet.

IFTTT If This Then That. A website and app that lets you automate tasks.

IMG A file that contains a complete copy of everything from a CD, DVD or hard drive.

IP address Internet Protocol address. A unique set of numbers used to identify computers and websites on the internet.

IP67 International Protection marking. The '6' denotes that a device is resistant to dust, dirt and sand. The '7' indicates that it can be placed underwater for 30 minutes at depths of up to one metre.

IPS A screen technology. Monitors that use it have wider viewing angles and better, more accurate-looking colours.

IPX8 An official industry rating meaning a device is suitable for continual submersion in water.

ISO file A type of image file that contains all the data from a CD or DVD.

Machine learning The science of teaching computers how to learn by themselves.

Mesh Wi-Fi Wireless network system that uses multiple, connected routers to stretch Wi-Fi.

MicroUSB A miniature version of USB, often found on smartphones, tablets and portable hard drives.

MIDI Musical instrument digital interface. A standard that enables compatible electronic musical instruments to communicate with computers.

Motherboard The main circuit board inside every PC into which all other parts connect.

NFC Near-field communication. A technology that allows two devices to communicate by being touched together or placed near to each other.

NTFS New Technology File System. A file system used by all recent versions of Windows.

Open source Software that can be modified by anyone.

Partition A large hard drive can be split into two or more partitions or 'virtual' drives.

PCI Express/PCIe Peripheral Component Interconnect Express. A faster version of PCI – a slot on the motherboard for expansion cards.

RAM Random-access memory. The computer's working area.

Ransomware Malware run by hackers who lock files on your PC and demand a payment to release them.

Read speed How long it takes a hard drive to 'read' data, and respond to it.

Refresh rate Measured in Hertz (Hz), the number of times per second that the image on your monitor is redrawn.

SATA Serial ATA. An interface for connecting modern hard drives and optical discs to a computer.

SD card Secure Digital card. A popular type of memory card.

Source code Program instructions written in a high-level language that are not readable by computers.

Speaker driver Cone-shaped part of the speaker that converts audio signals into sound waves.

sRGB A standard RGB colour space for use on monitors, printers and the internet.

SSD Solid-state drive. Storage that uses no moving parts.

SteamVR The operating system that runs on some virtual-reality gaming headsets.

System restore point Collection of system files stored on a given date and time to which Windows can revert if a problem occurs.

Tag A keyword used to describe a file or web page. Many programs use tags to organise related information quickly.

Two-factor authentication A system that uses two different means to identify the user.

UEFI Unified Extensible Firmware Interface. A modern replacement for the BIOS.

USB 2.0/3.0/3.1 Faster successors to USB.

Virtual PC A Windows tool that enables you to run a second 'virtual' operating system on a PC.

ZIP file A file that contains compressed documents or files.

Easy when you **Know How**



In an effort to tame her bloated filing cabinet and reclaim control in the middle of a house move, **Jane Hoskyn** works out how to...

Create a paper-digitising workflow

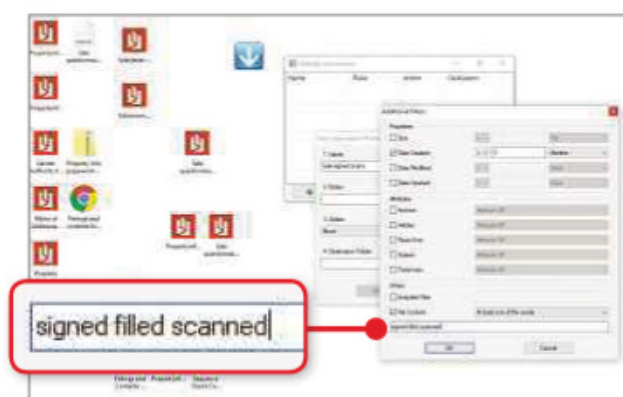
Paper is heaven (especially when made into magazines) but paperwork is hell. Over the years I've managed my paper mountain by shoving it into a filing cabinet, whose folder names have long since ceased to be useful ('Phone', 'Bank', the inevitable 'Misc'). E-bills and digital prescriptions have made life tidier, but recently I've been forced back to the filing cabinet by a profession wedded to paper: solicitors.

The conveyancing community, currently injecting daily torture into my efforts to move house, is like one of those rainforest tribes that carry on oblivious to the internal combustion engine. Solicitors throw (our) money at conveyancing websites that don't work. They create company logos of such gigabytitude that they crash your email inbox. And they circulate documents via email and then demand that you fill them in by hand, with a "wet signature", before returning them digitally.

Solicitors' obscenely awkward semi-digital system assumes that we all have printers, scanners and unlimited patience. Presumably, it's why a process that used to take six weeks is now four months minimum. I'm drowning here.

But rather than rocking in a paper pile I've devised a system to handle their system. First, I printed out the dozens of PDFs, filled them in, then used my scanner to turn each page back into a PDF.

Rather than wrap them in a ZIP file then explain to my solicitor what a ZIP file is, I used free online tool Combine PDF (see



Jane moved her freshly scanned and signed PDFs into folders by using DropIt



Put your scanned pages into Combine PDF, and out comes one tidy multi-page document

“
DropIt automatically sorts your files, like a cross between IFTTT and Miss Money Penny
”

screenshot above, <https://combinepdf.com>) to merge the pages into one PDF for sending to the conveyancing crew. The site also lets you convert Word documents and JPEGs to and from PDF, so it's very useful. You could use a free scan-and-combine app such as Tap Scanner (www.snipca.com/30859) instead, but my flatbed scanner was an investment and I'm jolly well going to keep using it.

If you were smart you'd print only those pages needing a wet signature, and do everything else digitally. I tried this, using PDF Filler (www.pdfiller.com) to complete property questionnaires and then using Combine PDF to attach the signed page. But then I ended up printing

the lot anyway, because this paperwork feels important enough to file in the cabinet. (Besides, PDF Filler costs £5 per month after a free trial.)

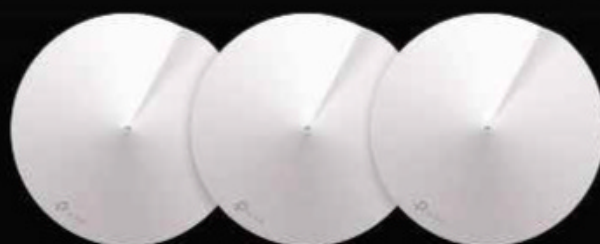
Once I got into it, I found the scanning and PDF-merging workflow satisfying, even soothing, and set about using it to digitise other paper that's been spilling out of my filing cabinet. I could then add tags to the files to make them easier to find later, but tagging and filing manually is tedious and, frankly, I could use a rest.

So my next step was DropIt (see screenshot left, www.dropitproject.com), a portable, **open-source** tool made by and for people drowning in a deluge of files. You set rules ('Associations' plus filters), then DropIt automatically sorts your files accordingly, like a cross between **IFTTT** and Miss Money Penny.

There's a blue arrow icon that I right-clicked to explore umpteen ways of telling the program what to do: compress files less than a month old whose text contains the word 'signed', encrypt read-only files larger than 1MB... you can imagine how addictive it became. There's no hidden charge or data-grabbing with DropIt, either. Give it another 60 years and even solicitors may discover it.

 **Need help digitising your paper mountain?**
Let us know:
noproblem@computeractive.co.uk

STREAMING WITHOUT LIMITS



Choose Deco mesh routers for high-speed, seamless, whole home Wi-Fi



Robust Parental
Control



3-Year Built-In
Antivirus



Quality of
Service



facebook.com/TPLINKUK

tp-link.com/uk



twitter.com/tplinkuk